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THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

THE HISTORY

OF

The Blessed Virgin Mary, MOTHER OF GOD.

Translated from the French of the Abbé Orsini.

BY

THE VERY REV. F. C. HUSENBETH, D.D.



"GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST AND ON EARTH
PEACE TO MEN OF GOOD WILL."

VIRTUE & Co LONDON & NEW YORK

THE LIFE

OF THE

BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

WITH THE

HISTORY OF THE DEVOTION TO HER.

FROM THE FRENCH OF THE ABBE ORSINI.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

MEDITATIONS ON THE LITANY OF THE VIRGIN.

FROM THE FRENCH OF THE ABBE EDOUARD BARTHE.

ALSO

POEMS ON THE LITANY OF LORETTO.

FROM THE GERMAN OF THE COUNTESS HAHN-HAHN.

TRANSLATED

BY THE VERY REV. F. C. HUSENBETH, D.D., V.G.,

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THE HISTORY

OF

THE BLESSED VIRGIN,

MOTHER OF GOD.

CHAPTER I.

UNIVERSAL EXPECTATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN AND THE MESSIAS.

In those ancient times which go back to the very infancy of the world, when our first parents, terrified and trembling, heard beneath the majestic shades of Eden[1] the thundering voice of Jehovah, who condemned them to exile, to labour, and to death, in punishment of their mad disobedience,—a mysterious prophecy, in which the goodness of the Creator was visible, even amid the vengeance of an irritated God, came to revive the dejected minds of those two frail creatures, who had sinned through pride, like Lucifer. A daughter of Eve, a woman with *masculine* courage, was to crush the head of the serpent beneath her feet, and regenerate for ever a guilty race:—that woman was Mary.

From that time it was a tradition, among the generations before the deluge, that a woman would come to repair the evil

(1) The word *Eden*, with the Arabs as well as among the Hebrews, is the name of the terrestrial Paradise, and of the Paradise of the elect. In Hebrew it signifies a place of delights; in Arabic, a place suitable for feeding flocks.

which the woman had done. This consoling tradition, which revived the hopes of a fallen race, was not effaced from the memory of men at the time of their great dispersion in the plains of Sennaar; they carried with them, beyond the mountains and seas, this sweet and distant hope, with the worship established by Noe, and the wreck of sciences and arts saved from the deluge.[1] Later on, when the primitive religion came to be weakened, and the ancient traditions were enveloped in clouds, that one of the Blessed Virgin and the Messias resisted, almost alone, the action of time, and rose above the ruins of the old creeds,—lost, as they were, in the fables of polytheism,—like that evergreen shrub which grows on the ruins of what was once Babylon the Great.[2]

Indeed, if we traverse the different regions of the globe, if we search from north to south, from west to east, the religious annals of nations, we shall find the promised Virgin, and her divine parturition, to be the foundation of almost every theogony.

In Thibet, in Japan, and in one part of the eastern peninsula of India, it is the god Fo, who, to save mankind, becomes incarnate in the womb of a young woman betrothed to a king, the nymph Lhamoghiuprul, the most beautiful and most holy of women.

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(1) It is certain that the race of primitive men, which was wild, but not savage, were early acquainted with the arts analogous to their wants and pleasures. Scarcely do the children of Adam form little groups of men, but we see them establish public worship, manufacture tents, build cities, forge iron, cast bronze, invent musical instruments, and follow the course of the stars. The history of astronomy must be referred, according to Bailly, to a people before the deluge, of whom all memory has perished, and from whom some remains of astronomical science have escaped the general revolution. Lalande, who is afraid that this assertion should prove too much in favour of the sacred books, attributes the origin of this science to the Egyptians; but the Hebrews, who as neighbours, contemporaries, and ancient dwellers among the Egyptians, have a claim to arbitrate upon this question, decide for Bailly against his opponent, by informing us that the Egyptians owed their first knowledge of astronomy to traditions saved from the deluge.—(See Josephus, Antiq. of the Jews.)

(2) There is but one solitary tree found amidst the ruins of Babylon; the Persians give it the name of *Athele:* according to them this tree existed in the ancient city, and was miraculously preserved, on purpose that their prophet, Ali, son-in-law of Mahomet, might tie his horse to it after the battle of Hilla. It is

In China, the Emperor Hoang-Ti is reckoned among the *Sons of Heaven*, whose mother conceived by the light of a flash of lightning. Another emperor, Yao, contemporary with the deluge, had for his mother a virgin, rendered fruitful by a ray of light from a star. Yu, the head of the first Chinese dynasty, owed his life to a pearl,[1]—that emblem of light all over the East,—which fell from heaven to the chaste womb of a young virgin. Heou-Tsi, the head of the dynasty of the Tcheous, was born without prejudice to the virginity of his mother, who conceived him by divine operation one day when she was at prayer; and brought him forth without effort and without defilement, in a deserted cave, where oxen and lambs warmed him with their breath.[2] The most popular goddess of the celestial empire, Schingmou, conceived by simple contact of a water-flower: her son, brought up beneath the poor roof of a fisherman, became a great man, and worked miracles.

The Lamas say that Buddha was born of the virgin Maha-Mahai. Sommonokhodom, the prince, legislator, and god of Siam, in like manner owes his birth to a virgin, rendered fruitful by the rays of the sun. Lao-Tseu becomes incarnate in the womb of a virgin, black, *marvellous, and beautiful as jasper.* The zodiacal Isis of the Egyptians is a virgin-mother. That of the Druids is to bring forth the future Saviour.[3]

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an evergreen shrub, and so scarce in those countries that only one more is found of the same kind at Bassora.—(Rich's Memoirs.)

(1) "The pearl," says Chardin, "has everywhere a distinctive name; in the East, the Turks and Tartars call it *mardjaun,* a globe of light; the Persians, *marvid,* produce of light."

(2) We find in the *Chi-King* two beautiful odes on this marvellous birth of Heou-Tsi; and the glozes and paraphrases of the learned on these verses agree in explaining them in a way which makes the resemblance to the divine parturition of Mary still more striking:—"Every one at his birth," says Ho-Sou, "destroys the integrity of his mother, and causes her the most cruel sufferings. Kiang-Yuen brought forth her son without suffering injury or pain. This was because *Tien* (Heaven) would display its power, and show how much the Holy One differs from men."—"Having been conceived by the operation of *Tien,*" says another commentator, Tsou-Tsong-Po, "who gave him his life by miracle, he was to be born without prejudice to his mother's virginity."

(3) "Hinc Druidæ statuam in intimis penetralibus erexerunt, Isidi seu virgini

The Brahmins teach that when a god takes flesh, he is born in the womb of a virgin by divine operation; thus Juggernath, the mutilated saviour of the world,[1] and Chrichna, born in a grotto, where angels and shepherds come to adore him in his cradle, have each a virgin for their mother.

The Babylonian woman, Dogdo, sees in a dream a bright messenger from Oromazes, who lays magnificent garments at her feet; a heavenly light falls upon the countenance of the sleeping female, who becomes beautiful as the *Day-Star*. Zerdhucht, Zoroaster, or rather Ebrahim-Zer-Ateucht,[2] the famous prophet of the Magi, is the fruit of this nocturnal vision. The tyrant Nemroud,[3] informed by his astrologers that an infant, not yet

dedicantes, ex qua filius ille proditurus erat (nempe generis humani Redemptor)." —(Elias Schedius, *de Diis Germanis*, cap. 13.)

(1) Juggernath, the seventh incarnation of Brahma, is represented in the shape of a pyramid, without feet and without hands. "He lost them," say the Brahmins, "because he wanted to carry the world, in order to save it."—(See Kircher.)

(2) Zer-Ateucht signifies "washed with silver:" this surname was given to Zoroaster, because, say the Ghebers, he proved his mission to a Sabean prince, who persecuted him, by plunging into a bath of melted silver.—(See Tavernier, t. ii. p. 92.)

(3) This Nemroud, whom Tavernier calls Neubrout, is, as some say, Nimrod, the famous hunter; according to others, the tyrant Zhohac, of the Persians, king of the first dynasty of the princes who reigned immediately after the deluge. According to the author of *Mefathi alôloum*, Nemroud would be the same as Caïcaous, the second king of the second dynasty of Persia, called the Caïanides. The Persian historians give him a reign of nearly two centuries, which is certainly rather long. Some make him a wicked man, who had the strange fancy to ascend to heaven in a chest drawn by four of those monstrous birds called *kerkes*, of whom the ancient Oriental authors make mention in their romances. After wandering about in the air some time, he fell down again upon a mountain so violently, say the ancient legends of Persia, that it was shaken by it even to its foundation. According to the Persians, this Nemroud had Zerdhucht, whom they confound with Abraham, thrown into a burning furnace; according to others, Nemroud was by religion a Sabean, and it was he that first established the worship of fire.—(D'Herbelot, Bibliothèque Orientale, t. iii. p. 32.) The Jews claim for Abraham, the father and stock of their people, this persecution of Nemroud, the honour of which the Persians give to Zerdhucht, their lawgiver. St. Jerom relates an ancient tradition of the Jews, which declared that Abraham had been cast into the fire by order of the Chaldeans, because he would not adore it.—(Hieron., Quæst. in Genes.) Certain Jewish rabbins, much more modern, confirm this tradition: R. Chain ben Adda relates that Abraham, having met with a

born, threatens his gods and his throne, causes all the pregnant women in his dominions to be put to death: Zerdhucht, nevertheless, is saved by the ingenuity and prudence of his mother.[1] The Macenicans, who dwell in Paraguay, on the borders of the Lake Zarayas, relate that at a very remote period a woman of rare beauty became a mother, and remained still a virgin; her son, after working extraordinary miracles, raised himself in the air one day, in presence of his disciples, and transformed himself into a sun.[2]

Let all the scattered fragments of these mutilated creeds be collected together, and we shall reconstruct, in almost all its details, the history of the Blessed Virgin and of Christ. The Blessed Virgin, notwithstanding the royal blood which circulates in her veins, is of an obscure condition, like the mother of Zoroaster; like her also, she receives the visit of an angel bearing a message from heaven. The tyrant Nemroud, who was the worst of a number of very wicked princes, may pass for the type of Herod, and as resolutely seeks the death of the young Magian as the sanguinary spouse of Mariamne seeks the destruction of the infant Jesus: both let their prey escape. Born of a virgin who conceives him during fervent prayer, and brings him forth without defilement and without pain, in a poor stable, like the first-born of the noble and pious Kiang-Yuen, our divine Saviour lives in the midst of the poor classes, like the son of the Chinese goddess; angels and shepherds come to pay him homage, as was done to Chrichna, on the very night of his birth; then, after stilling the tempests, walking on the waters, casting out devils, and raising the dead to life, he achieves his triumphant ascension in presence of five hundred disciples, whose eyes, all dazzled, lose sight of

young girl who carried an idol about her, broke it to pieces; a complaint was immediately laid before Nemroud, who required Abraham to adore fire. The patriarch answered very sensibly, that it would be more natural to adore water, which extinguishes fire, the clouds which produce the water, the wind which collects the clouds, and man, who is a being more perfect than the wind. Nemroud, enraged at this bold answer, ordered Abraham to be cast into the fire, which spared him.

(1) See Tavernier, *loc. cit.* (2) See Muratori.

him in a cloud, precisely as related by the savage hordes of Paraguay.

It is surely very strange that these marvellous legends, which have not been taken from the gospel facts, since they are incontestably more ancient, should form, when connected together, the actual life of the Son of God. Can truth then spring from error? What are we to think of these curious resemblances? Must we say, with the sneering philosophers of the school of Voltaire, and a few German visionaries of rather more modern date, that the apostles borrowed these fables from the various creeds of Asia? But, not to speak of the jealous care with which the books reputed divine were in those times concealed in the impenetrable obscurity of the sanctuaries,—not to speak of the profound horror which the Jews professed of idolatrous legends, and their disdainful contempt for the learning of foreigners,—how should poor men of the lower class, whose whole knowledge was limited to steering a bark over the waters of the Lake of Gennesareth, and whose nets were still dripping with its fresh waters when they were promoted to the apostleship,—how should laborious artizans, obliged to work for their daily bread in the midst of their preaching, have turned over the sacred books of the Hindoos, Chinese, Bactrians, Phœnicians, and Persians? What likelihood was there that Simon Peter, the sons of Zebedee, or that austere disciple of Gamaliel, who said boldly at Corinth, the rich and learned Greek city, "I judged not myself to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ: and him crucified!" should have snatched from idolatry, which they were sent to destroy, some few of its old shreds, to join them on fraudulently to the life of Christ, so simple and so grand. Again, if the question were only of borrowing from the mythic legends of nations bordering on Palestine,—such, for example, as the Egyptians and Phœnicians,—however unjust the accusation, it would have had at least some colour of probability; but no! these brilliant points which go forth from the womb of the darkness of idolatry to form, like so many little stars, the glory of the Son of the Virgin, come from places the most remote and least known of the earth.

To say nothing of that Gaul, with its impenetrable forests, which concealed, at the western extremity of Europe, its mysterious doctrines under the shade of oaks; of the Great Indies, so imperfectly known under Tiberius; of that Serica, with its towers of porcelain, whose far-distant provinces did not tempt even the greedy Romans,[1]—how could the apostles have communicated with far distant America, separated from the old continent by its green girdle of waves, and lost like a pearl amidst the waters?

But I will suppose that the apostles had—no matter how—a knowledge of these ancient myths scattered over every part of the globe. I go further: I admit, setting aside the native simplicity, the blood-sealed testimony, the exalted sanctity of these divine men—I admit that, carried away, as Rousseau says, by the ardent glory of their Master, it did occur to their thoughts, for a moment, to embroider the texture of the gospel with certain fabulous circumstances; even so, the thing would have been beyond their power. With what face, for example, could they have attributed to that Herod whom all Jerusalem had known, whose glorious and tragical reign every one knew by heart, an atrocious deed revived, without the least probability, of some unknown king of Persia, who, perhaps, never had any existence but in the imagination of the reveries of the Magi? If the massacre of the innocents had been a story *fabricated* or *copied* by the apostles, can any one believe that the Bethlehemites, having such means of knowing what passed in the holy city, the lofty towers of which they saw in the horizon, would not have strongly protested against this audacious falsehood; that those subtile Pharisees, who had sought to ensnare Jesus himself in his speech, would have let it pass current without refutation; or that the Herodians would have endured with patience to have so black a stain falsely imprinted upon the renown of a prince of

(1) It was in the reign of Augustus that the Roman people received the first embassy from the Seres, whom we now call the Chinese: the ambassadors declared that they had been three years on their journey.

whom they had almost made a god,[1] and who had loaded them with riches and honours?

If all were silent, it was because the thing was too well proved, too public, too recent as yet to leave the field open to contradictions; it was because, at two hours' journey from Jerusalem, were the mothers of those martyrs who had paid with their young lives for the honour of having been born at the same time with Christ; it was because whole villages had seen the murderous steel glitter, and heard the cries of death; it was because, at the first attempt to charge the Christians with falsehood, a whole population would have started up to exclaim, "But we ourselves were there!"[2]

It is the same with the divine parturition of Mary, with the visit of the shepherds sent by the angels, the glorious resurrection, and, in fine, with all the prodigies which signalized the coming of Christ. The apostles wrote even in the lifetime of those who had figured in the scenes which they related, and, before they consigned to writing those prodigies of the Messias, they had boldly preached them in the very temple of Jehovah, before that immense multitude of Hebrews from every province,

(1) The flatterers of Herod I., dazzled with the grandeur and magnificence of that prince, maintained that he was the *Messias*. This it was that gave rise to the sect of the Herodians, of whom so much is said in the gospel, and whom the pagans knew, since Persius and his scholiast tell us, that even in the time of Nero, the birthday of King Herod was celebrated by his followers with the same solemnity as the Sabbath.

(2) "Neither Josephus nor the rabbins speak of the massacre of the innocents," says Strauss. "Macrobius, who lived in the fourth century, is the only one who says a word about the massacre ordered by Herod." Strauss is mistaken: the Toldos, whence Celsus derived some of the facts injurious to Christianity which he has interspersed in his writings, speak positively of it, and this fact is in the Talmud. See how Bossuet answers those who deny the gospel fact, and never was answer more decisive: "Where now are they," says he, "who, to secure their faith, would have it that the profane historians of the time ought to have made mention of this cruelty of Herod as well as of others? As if our faith ought to depend on what the affected negligence or policy of the historians of the world made them say, or leave unsaid, in their histories! Let us leave all such feeble ideas; human views alone would have sufficed to prevent the Evangelist from bringing discredit upon his holy gospel, by recording therein a fact so public, if it had not been so certain."

who repaired thither to sacrifice, or to bring in the first-fruits; which would have composed the most dangerous audience in the world for them if they had spoken falsely.

So far from fearing contradictions, which would not have been wanting in case of imposture, St. Peter speaks to this numerous assemblage like a man sure of the adhesion of them all; he is not afraid to appeal to the still recent recollections of those who hear him; he affirms those miracles which marked the mission of the Son of Mary with the seal of the divinity, even before the great council of the nation, which contributed its utmost to the crucifixion of Jesus. And the senators of Israel, terrified and furious, ordered St. Peter and St. John to be scourged, to compel them to keep silence; but they do not deny —the Talmud owns it—those prodigies, which they stupidly attribute to magic. Accordingly, they do not say to the apostles, when dragged before them by the keepers of the temple, "You are dreamers or liars." They say to them, with an agitation which sufficiently proves their secret fears, "Hold your peace! would you have the people stone us?" To which these two men, simple in heart, but great in soul, resolutely answer, "We will not hold our peace! God commands us to speak, and it is better to obey him than men." Imposture is not thus fearless.

After examining the acts, the character, and position of the apostles, every impartial man will be forced to admit that they were neither deceivers, nor deceived, and that they are no way concerned in those coincidences which are remarked between the gospel facts and the traditions of ancient nations, more or less mixed up with fables.

But then, how are these analogies to be explained? Is it a game of chance, an accidental concurrence?

It has not happened by chance that the mystery of the Incarnation of a God in the chaste womb of a Virgin is one of the fundamental points of belief in Asia; it is not merely accidental that the privileged women who bear in their wombs this emanation of the divinity are always pure, beautiful, holy; that they have names glorious and full of mystery, which signify in all

the ancient tongues, *beauty expected*, *virgin immaculate*, *faithful virgin*, *felicity of the human race*, *polar star;* and that they are so like each other, that one would say that they were moulded after some remote pattern, concealed from us by the night of time. In fine, it is not by mere chance that a ray of light unites the divine nature with the human.

These opinions, where we recognise the stamp of the primitive times, evidently go back to the infancy of the world. The antediluvian patriarchs,—that chain of aged men who lived as long as the cedars,—seeking to form an idea of that woman, blessed among all others, whose miraculous maternity was to save the human race, figured her to themselves under the features of Eve before her fall; they gave to her a majestic and sacred beauty, which could create no other sentiment in the souls of the children of men than that of religious veneration; they made her a lovely star, with a soft, mysterious, chaste, and veiled light, the rising of which was to precede that of the Sun of Justice.

The means by which God causes fecundity to descend into her virginal womb, agree in a striking manner among the different nations of the world. Take a view of all the ancient religions, you will see in them a sacred fire. Now fire was, among the Persians, the terrestrial emblem of the sun, and the sun itself was but the dwelling of the Most High—the glorious tent of *the God of heaven.*[1]

The Hebrews, who shared this belief, acknowledged the divine presence, or *Schekina*, in the luminous cloud which hovered between the cherubim of the propitiatory; and believed that God was clothed with light as with a garment, when he manifested himself to men on solemn occasions. It was the opinion of the synagogue, and the tradition of the temple said, that in the midst of the bush of wild roses, which burnt without being consumed on Mount Horeb, where Moses, that great shepherd of men, was feeding at the time the Arabian flocks of his father-in-law, a very beautiful face was distinguished, resembling nothing that we see

(1) The Persians suppose that the throne of God is in the sun, says Hanway, and hence their veneration for that luminary.

here below; and that this celestial figure, which was brighter than a flame and more brilliant than lightning, was undoubtedly the image of the eternal God.[1] After this, it is not difficult to understand the grounds of the opinion, generally spread, that a luminous ray was to bring fecundity to the womb of the Virgin *reparatrix*, who was the expectation of nations.

With this graceful tradition of a pure virgin admitted to celestial nuptials, surrounded by mystery impenetrable, was connected the tradition of a God Saviour, born of her womb, who was to suffer and die for the salvation of the world.[2] This tradition was not perpetuated, like the other, by means of brilliant and poetical images, but by terror, which resists in a different way from poetry all attempts to efface it. The bloody sacrifice, which we find established, from the most distant times, among almost all nations, had no other object than to preserve among men the remembrance of the promise of the immolation of Calvary: it is easy to prove it.

Worship, that manifestation of love, that homage of gratitude, which Adam and Eve were bound to pay to God immediately after the benefit of their creation, consisted, no doubt, in Eden, of innocent prayers and offerings of fruits and flowers alone.[3] But when, ungrateful as they were! they had broken the precept of easy observance, which the Lord had imposed upon them as a sweet yoke, and solely to make them sensible that they had a Master,—when they had lost, with the immortalising fruits of the tree of life,[4] their talisman against death,[5] and they descended

(1) Philo, Life of Moses.

(2) This tradition is found in the sacred books of China.—(See the work of F. Prémare, entitled, Selecta quædam vestigia præcipuorum Christianæ religionis dogmatum ex antiquis libris eruta.)

(3) Porphyr., de Abst., lib. ii.

(4) God could attach to plants certain natural virtues with reference to our bodies, and it is easy to believe that the fruit of the tree of life had the power of renewing the body by an aliment so well proportioned and so efficacious, that by making use of it, men would not have died.—(Bossuet, Elev. sur les Myst., t. i. p. 231.)

(5) Man was never immortal in this world in the same way as the pure spirits, for a body formed from dust must naturally return to dust; he was so by a

from the charming slopes of Eden to a land bristling with brambles and thorns, of which they were obliged to open the virgin soil for their support,—they added to the wild fruits and flowers, produced by the land of exile, the firstlings of their flocks. This deserves attention. Adam, who to perfection of form added a soul intelligent and exalted, in which the Lord had planted the germ of every virtue and every science, could not be without humanity. His fatal complacency towards Eve exhibits him to us as loving even to weakness, and thereby susceptible in the highest degree of soft and benevolent affections. How came it then into his mind that the Creator could be pleased with the violent death of his creature, and that an act of destruction could be an act of piety?

The immolation of animals, which has not the smallest connexion with the vows and prayers of man, and which the exclusively vegetable diet of the primitive patriarchs left without any other object but murder, must have stirred up in the head of the human race a thousand feelings of natural repugnance. For a

favour unexampled, and granted conditionally, which exalted him and maintained him in a position very superior to his proper sphere. Immortality here below was never acquired by man by right of birth; every terrestrial body must perish by the dissolution of its parts, unless a special will of the Creator opposes this: such divine will was manifested in favour of our first parent. God planted, in the delightful garden where he had placed mortal man, the tree of life—a plant of heavenly origin, which had the property of repelling death, as the laurel, according to the ancients, repels lightning. To this mysterious tree was attached the immortality of the human race; afar from this protecting tree, death recovered his prey, and man fell back from the height of heaven into his miserable coating of clay.—(Aug., Quæst. Vet. et Nov. Test., q. 19, p. 450.) No one, I imagine, will call in question that God acted upon his just right in banishing Adam from the earthly Paradise after his disobedience; but banishment involved the sentence of death upon man and his posterity; without the tree of life, he was no longer anything better than a frail and perishable creature, subject to the laws which govern created bodies: when the antidote fails, it is plain that poison kills. Again become mortal, Adam begot children like himself: the children must follow the condition to which their father had fallen. In this God did the human race no wrong; we are mortal by our nature; he has left us such as we were. To withdraw a gratuitous favour, when the subject of such favour tears up with his own hands the deed which confers it upon him, is not cruelty, it is justice.

long time these poor creatures, deprived of reason, but capable of attachment, had composed in Eden the court of the solitary monarch; then he sat with them at the same table, slept on the moss of the same bank, quenched his thirst at the same fountain, and his prayer ascended to heaven at sunrise and sunset together with the warbling of the birds, who seemed also to be singing their morning or evening hymn. These companions of his happy life, involved in his misfortune, shared in his banishment:[1] some, yielding to savage instinct, which had not declared itself in Paradise, fled into the depths of deserts and the hidden caves of mountains, whence they soon declared war unto death against their old master; others, inoffensive and gentle creatures, settled round about the grotto of their lord, to whom they offered their milk, their labour, their fleeces, and their melodious concerts, to satisfy his wants and charm away his sufferings. Well, it was among the ranks, not over numerous, of these humble friends, who had remained faithful to him in his distress, that Adam chose and marked out his victims; it was in the throat of the heifer which exhausted its udder to feed him, of the dove which took shelter in his bosom when the vulture hovered in the air, of the lamb which left its flowery pasture to come and lick his hand,

(1) We know not exactly the time which Adam and Eve remained in the earthly Paradise; yet this abode must have been of some duration, and thus Milton understood it, whom we do not quote here in his character of a poet, but as a profound orientalist. If we recollect, moreover, that it was in Eden that Adam learned to distinguish and call by their names all the birds of the air, all the beasts of the earth, all the fishes which swim in the waters; that there he learned the virtues of plants, and what God thought proper to teach him of the course of the stars, we shall conclude that this was not the work of one day. The Persians and Chinese make the first man dwell in Paradise for several centuries. According to the opinion of the Arabs and rabbins, he remained there only half a day; but this half day of Paradise is equivalent, according to them, to five hundred years; for one day of Paradise answers to a thousand years. This space of time is too long, according to our ideas. It is commonly believed that Cain, whose birth is closely connected, in Genesis, with the expulsion of his parents, was born in the year 13 of the creation, which would fix the abode in Paradise at about twelve years. This term, though rather short, would have sufficed for the first man to establish his authority over the animals subject to his sceptre, and to attach him to his humble subjects by the bonds of habit.

that he had the heart to plunge the knife. Ah! when man, unskilled as yet in killing, stretched at his feet a poor creature, gentle and timid, which struggled in a tide of blood amidst the chokings of agony, he must have stood pale and dismayed, like the assassin after his first murder! This thought came not from him; it was not an act of choice, but of painful obedience. Who imposed it? He alone to whom it belongs to dispose of life and death—God.

Adam committed a fault so enormous by its aggravating circumstances and disastrous consequences, that to express its full enormity, the Hebrew tradition relates that the sun was darkened with horror.[1] Satan attacked him in his strength, at the time when he knew nothing, as yet, but good; in the most beautiful abode of the earth, under the recent impression of the immense benefit of his creation, free, happy, tranquil, immortal, and capable of resisting if he had only pleased. From this high position it was that he fell into the frightful abyss of disobedience and ingratitude. The justice of God demanded a punishment proportioned to the offence: man was condemned to die a double death; and there was no hope for the human race, if a divine Being, predestined before the birth of time to the work of our redemption, had not undertaken to satisfy for us all. From that time he was called the Messias, and revealed as a Saviour at that very moment when the voice of God, "that voice which breaketh down the cedars," pronounced the sentence of the three guilty ones. "Because thou hast done this," said God to the serpent seducer, who proudly lifted up his head from our ruin, "the seed of the woman, that is, a fruit produced from her, shall bruise thy head."

The Hebrew tradition adds that God, moved by the repentance

(1) It is in memory of the sin of Eve, at the sight of which, according to the Jews, the sun withdrew his light, that the Jewish women are specially commanded to light lamps, which burn in every house during the night of the Sabbath. "It is just," say the Hebrew doctors, "that the women should rekindle the torch which they have extinguished, and that they should be burthened with this punishment in expiation of their sin."—(Basnage, liv. vii. c. 13.)

of our first parents, revealed to them by an angel that a just man should be born of them, who should destroy the pernicious effects of the fruit of the tree of knowledge,[1] by means of a voluntary oblation, and that he should be the salvation of those who should place their hope in him.[2] On the other hand, the Arabian traditions inform us that God, who is indignant and merciful, was pleased to make known to man the mode of imploring his pardon. This worship, revealed by God, was certainly sacrifice, a ceremony at once commemorative, expiatory, and symbolical, by which man confessed that he had deserved death, and by substituting innocent victims in his stead, recalled perpetually to his remembrance the great victim of Calvary.

Thus then the institution of the bloody sacrifice, which was no human invention, reposed in reality upon a thought of the divine mercy; since it perpetuated among all nations that tradition of the Messias, without which the work of redemption would have been a benefit lost.

God matures his counsels in the course of ages, for a thousand years are with him as one day; but man is eager to obtain, for man endures but a short time. It appears that Eve had concluded, from the words of the angel, that she should be the mother of this Redeemer promised to her, and that in this thought she showed transports of extraordinary joy in bringing forth Cain,[3] whom she took for her Saviour. Undeceived by the perverse inclinations which he showed, she transferred her hopes to Abel, that so much beloved son, whose name recalls to mind the

(1) It is generally supposed among Christians, that the tree of knowledge was an apple-tree; the Persians, on the contrary, maintain that this fatal tree was a fig-tree. In our days, the German Eichhorn makes it a species of manchineel. "Making due deduction from the marvellous which surrounds the fall of man," says the rationalist writer, "the fact remains that the constitution of the human body was, at first, vitiated by the use of a poisonous fruit."—(Eichhorn's Argeschichte.)

(2) Basnage, liv. vi. c. 25, p. 417.

(3) Cain is called *Cabel* by all the Arabic authors; this name, which means *the first*, is perhaps his proper name. The surname of Cain, which signifies *traitor*, may have been given to him afterwards.—(Savary, in a note to c. 5 of the Koran.)

mourning and tears of his mother;[1] then to Seth;[2] but in vain, for the gates which angels guarded with fiery swords opened to her no more. The just of the race of Seth, those pure and contemplative men, whom the Scripture calls the sons of God, and whom the Assyrian legends call *genii*, flattered themselves a long time with the same hope, for the Jewish tradition represents them to us as wandering about the heights bordering on the garden of Eden,[3] the gigantic cedars[4] of which they admired with sighs, and where they flattered themselves that one of their just ones would enable them again to enter. But it was not the name of a virgin of the primitive times which was written in the immutable decrees of the Eternal; and the earth, yet trembling under the divine malediction, stood in need of being washed as by the ablutions of a baptism, before the feet of Him who was to bring good tidings on the mountains, should leave upon them their sacred impression.

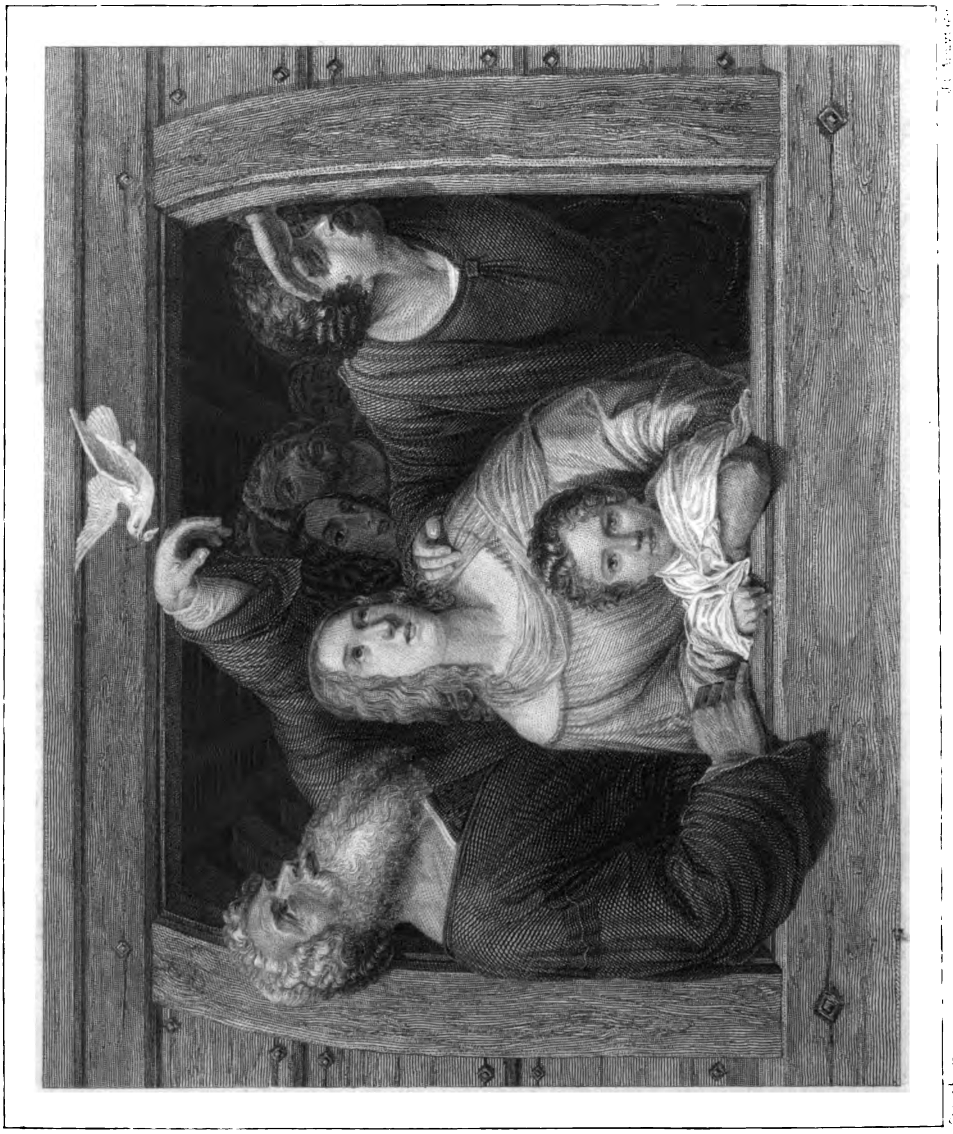
When the earth had absorbed the waters of the deluge, and

(1) Abel, which the Arabs write *Habel,* is, according to them, only the surname of that youthful shepherd who was the first type of Jesus Christ. In fact, it puts us in mind of that sorrowful event which threw the family of Adam into mourning, and properly signifies, says Savary (*loco citato*), "He has left by his death a mother in tears." Josephus, in like manner, says that the name of Abel signifies mourning.—(Antiq. Jud., p. 4.)

(2) See Basnage, liv. vi. c. 25.

(3) The Arabic traditions place the terrestrial Paradise in that beautiful valley of Damascus, which the oriental poets designate by the name of the Emerald of the Desert. Its admirable situation, its beauty, its fertility, justify this idea; and a learned commentator on Genesis has not hesitated to consider this beautiful site as that of the garden of Eden, although the names of the Euphrates and the Tigris indicate a rather different situation. In support of this Arabic tradition there is shown, at half-a-day's journey from Damascus, a high mountain of white marble, overshadowed by beautiful trees, where there is a cavern, which is looked upon as the dwelling of Adam, Abel, and Cain; there is also seen the sepulchre of Abel, which is much respected by the Turks: the place where the fratricide was committed is marked by four columns.—(D'Herbelot, Bibliothèque Orientale, pp. 772 and 780; F. Pacifique, in his Commentaires sur la Bible.)

(4) The great cedars of Eden have remained traditionally in the memory of the Hebrews, who have made the terrestrial Paradise their paradise. In most of their epitaphs we read these words—"He has gone down into the garden of Eden, to those who are among the cedars."—(Basnage, t. v. liv. vii.)



the winds had dried it up, the new family of mankind, which revived under favourable promises, were eager to re-establish the worship practised by Enos. Noe added to it the seven precepts which bear his name, without forgetting those historical and religious traditions which his long existence before the flood had enabled him to collect. He told of man being formed of the earth, of his rebellion, his fall, his future restoration, for which the world would be indebted to the miraculous parturition of a new Eve. At the sight of the bloody sacrifices offered for the unexpiated fault of their first fathers, he taught his descendants to lift up their eyes to a more august victim, seated at the right hand of Jehovah in the starry heights of heaven,—a victim of which the oblation of heifers and lambs was but the figure.[1]

The nations at first faithfully preserved these primitive notions, which are constantly met with as the foundation of all creeds.[2] They built altars at the confluence of rivers, in the shade of forests, on the summits of mountains, on the shores of the green ocean, and on the sandy downs where the wormwood expands its leaves to the winds of the desert. The soft moonlight from the beginning lighted those rustic temples, which had no other boundaries than the horizon, no other ceiling than the sky with all its stars. At that far distant period, God was worthily adored, and with ideas so exact, so sublime, so uniform and so simple, that they evidently could be traced up to himself.

(1) "The old law bears throughout the character of blood and death, as a figure of the new law established and confirmed by the blood of Jesus Christ."—(Bossuet, Elev. sur les Myst., t. i. p. 428.)

(2) The Indians, Chinese, Peruvians, and Hurons, acknowledge that the first man was formed from the earth. The Brahmins, who make enchanting pictures of their *choream* (paradise), place in it a tree the fruit of which would confer immortality, if it were allowed to eat of it. The Persians relate that the evil genius Ahriman seduced our first parents under the form of a *snake*. The history of the woman deceived at the foot of a tree, of the anger of God, and of the first fratricide, was a tradition among the Iroquois. The Tartars attribute our fall to a plant as sweet as honey, and of marvellous beauty; the Thibetans, to the fault of having tasted the dangerous plant *schimæ*, sweet and white as sugar: the knowledge of their state of nudity was revealed by this fruit. The tradition of the woman and the serpent was equally known in Mexico, &c.—(See Le Christ devant la Siècle, by M. Roselly de Lorgues, c. 9.)

Nevertheless, an element of superstitious terror,—founded upon the terrible and recent remembrance of the drowning of the globe, a remembrance visible, traces of which are found in most of the religious festivals of antiquity,[1]—like a principle of destruction, crept into the post-diluvian worship. Herded together on the elevated plains of Caucasus, and the mountains of Armenia, the descendants of Noe had long refused, with an obstinacy which the authority of Noe himself had been unable to conquer, to go down again into the plain; so much did they dread a second deluge! In vain did the rainbow display in the cloud—as if to remove all fear from the children of men—its soft and benign colours, where the green of the emerald united with the blue of the sapphire; this happy prognostic, this beautiful sign of a God appeased, diminished, but could not banish, a terror which had taken deep root: the tower of Babel is the proof. This gigantic monument of human pride concealed beneath its insolent defiance an immense amount of fear. It was as a fortress of refuge against the occurrence of a new deluge, which that race, which began already to be corrupt, felt that it again deserved. And when the confusion of tongues forced the descendants of Noe to disperse,—when they saw their precaution, offensive as it was to the sworn clemency of the Lord, turn to their confusion,—they were only the more disposed to be alarmed afresh.

It must be owned, as some excuse for them, that the earth presented at that time a spectacle but little encouraging; the whole economy of creation was in confusion. The rivers, straying out of their courses, formed immense fens of water and putrid marshes[2] in the vast plains which before the deluge were ren-

(1) See Boulanger, Antiq. devoilée.

(2) History has preserved us proofs of this displacement of rivers after the deluge. We read in Strabo, b. ii., that the Araxes, which waters Armenia, was still without any outlet, and inundated the country, when Jason, the chief of the Argonauts, opened a subterranean channel, by which the Araxes flowed into the Caspian Sea. In the celebrated *Chou-King* of Confucius, the Emperor Yao says that the waters, which formerly rose up to heaven, still bathed the feet of the

dered full of animation by the graceful tents of the shepherds. The cedars lay extended along the sea-shores, whilst the spoils of the ocean were found on the summits of high mountains eternally covered with snow. Nothing was seen on all sides but towers levelled with the turf,[1] and towns silent and in ruins. The ploughshare everywhere struck against bones and rubbish. The vengeance of provoked heaven had weighed heavily upon the human race, in a manner so overwhelming, that man, whose heart was still beating with fear at the remembrance of the perils which he had encountered, felt more disposed to dread his sovereign Master with great fear, than to love him with confiding affection: he was afraid of God! He distrusted his promises and his goodness. Like the shipwrecked man who is drowning, he sought eagerly around him for something to help him, which might interpose and conjure in the hour of need that sacred, but terrible wrath. Noe had spoken of a Being powerful and divine, whose tender love for men was infinite, who was to plead their cause before the Eternal, and take their crimes upon himself; but who was this anxiously desired Mediator, this powerful friend? He was no longer known. The descendants of Sem thought they had found him in the stars which charmed their solitary vigils, and which they supposed to be animated by celestial intelligences;[2] they entreated those intelligences to protect

highest mountains, and made the plains which they overflowed incapable of cultivation.—(Freret, Chron. des Chinois, 1ère partie.)

(1) The tower of Babel, so near to the great deluge, may give some idea of antediluvian architecture; they had employed in it brick and bitumen. If, as everything leads us to believe, this immense tower resembled the ancient and famous tower of Bel, at Babylon, it was surrounded by a staircase outside, of gentle ascent, which rose spirally to the platform, and gave this edifice the appearance of seven towers heaped up, one upon another.

(2) It is a very ancient belief in the East, that the stars are living creatures; the Jewish doctors had fallen into this error, which was of much older origin than their people. Philo said that the stars were intelligent creatures, who had never done any harm, and were incapable of any. According to Maimonides, the stars knew God who made them, knew themselves, and their actions are always good and holy.—(Philo., de Mundi Opificio, de Gigant., de Somniis; Maimonides, More nevochim, pt. ii. c. 4, p. 194, et de Fundam. legis, c. 3, § 11.) The modern Persians still sacrifice to the angel of the moon.

them, and lighted fires on the heights of mountains in their honour.[1]

This was the origin of Sabeanism, which degenerated into idolatry, when the reprobate race of Cham, attaching themselves to the material object, adored fire, water, earth, agitated air; and, insolently deriding the worship practised by Noe, who knew nothing of images, consecrated statues of silver to the moon, and statues of gold to the sun.[2]

As time went on, the darkness thickened; religious systems were loaded with rites; the worship of the true God was gradually mixed up with that of the stars and the elements; the invention of hieroglyphics completed the confusion; and the few truths which escaped the subversion of religious belief were mysteriously hidden in the recesses of idolatrous sanctuaries, like sepulchral lamps, which burn only for the dead. They were withdrawn assiduously from the multitude,[3] who lavished their senseless adorations on stones, trees, rivers, mountains, and animals, a still more degrading worship, and which ended by placing their vices and passions in heaven. Then it was that impostors, speculating upon human credulity, confounded or purposely broke

(1) According to R. Bechai, the Sabeans did not adore the sun; they only lighted fires on the earth to thank God for the torch which he lighted up for them in the heavens; and when they looked at the stars, they besought the angels whom God has placed there, to move them to be favourable to them.—(R. Bechai, Comm. in Genes., c. 1.) The fires still lighted in almost every country in Europe, and which in France are called fires of St. John, are remnants of Sabeanism.

(2) The ancient Arabs, descended from Cham, despised Noe because he did not serve images; they consecrated statues of silver to the moon, and statues of gold to the sun; they divided the metals and climates among the stars; they believed that they have great influence over things which are devoted to them, and to the images consecrated to them.—(Maimonides, More nevochim, pt. iii. c. ii. p. 423.)

(3) Plato, speaking of the God who formed the universe, says that he is forbidden to make him known to the people. The books of Numa, written upon the bark of the birch-tree, and found in his tomb many ages after his death, were secretly burnt as dangerous to polytheism. The Brahmins, who, if certain travellers are to be believed, have a sublime idea of the Divinity, make the Hindoos nevertheless adore the most hideous idols that ever existed. The true religion alone has treated men as immortal and rational creatures.

the thread of patriarchal traditions which already hung so loosely together, and audaciously substituting remembrance for hope, assembled around the cradles of their fabulous kings, their false prophets and powerless divinities, the wonders of the Incarnation of the WORD, and the primitive revelations of his exalted and tragical destiny.

Thus, we maintain, those analogies are explained which at first appear incomprehensible.

All the nations of polytheism, however, did not take the mystery of the Messias for an accomplished fact. The Druids, immediately before the Christian era, still erected, in the dark forests of Gaul, an altar to the Virgin "who was to bring forth." The Chinese, taught by Confucius, who had himself found this oracle in ancient traditions, expected the "HOLY ONE, born of a virgin and Son of God, who was to die for the salvation of the world,"[1] in the western regions of Asia, and sent after him, by a solemn embassy, less than half a century after the death of the Man-God. The Magi, on the faith of Zerdhucht, studied the constellations to find there the star of Jacob, which was to guide them to the cradle of Christ.[2] The Brahmins sighed after the *avatar*[3] of him who was to "purify the world from sin," and prayed for him to Wichnou, as they laid upon his altar, sparkling with precious stones, odoriferous tufts of basil, the favourite plant of the Indian god. The proud sons of Romulus, those idolaters by pre-eminence, who had created whole legions of gods,

(1) According to the ancient sages of China, says the learned Schmitt, the Holy One, the miraculous man, will renew the world, change the manners, expiate the sins of the world, die overwhelmed with grief and opprobrium, and open the gates of heaven.—(See Redempt. du genre humain.)

(2) Abulfarage (Historia Dynastiarum) says that Zerdhucht foretold to the Magi the birth of the Messias, born of a virgin; he added that, at the time of his birth an unknown star would appear, which would conduct them to his cradle, and he commanded them to carry him presents. Sharistani, a Mussulman author, relates in like manner a prophecy of Zerdhucht, relating to a great prophet who should reform the world, as well in the matter of religion as in that of justice, and to whom the princes and kings of the earth should be subject.

(3) *Avatar*, the fabulous incarnation of a Hindoo divinity.

read in those books of the Cumeau Sibyl, contemporary with Achilles and Hector, so jealously and politically guarded, "the virgin, the divine child, the adoration of the shepherds, the serpent vanquished, and the golden age restored to the earth." In fine, towards the time of the Messias, all the nations of the East were in expectation of a future Saviour; and Boulanger, who thought better of it on his death-bed, after showing how general this expectation was, illogically calls it an universal chimera.[1]

But what were these pale glimmerings, too weak to dissipate the darkness of idolatry, compared with the stream of light which illuminated the elect people of God? We are struck with astonishment at the sight of this chain of prophecy, the first link of which hangs on to the infancy of the world, while the last is fastened to the tomb of Christ.[2] The threat of Jehovah to the infernal serpent includes, as we have already observed, the first of the oracles relating to the Messias. We have also said, and the Jewish traditions confirm it, that this oracle was more particularly explained, in the sequel, to the exiles of Eden, when they were reconciled to heaven by repentance.[3] Noe, who was constituted by God heir of the faith,[4] transmitted these revelations to Sem; and Sem, whose long life nearly equalled those of his ancestors, might have repeated them to the father of the faithful. Then it was that a mysterious benediction, which comprised the promise of the Messias, announced that the blessed germ promised to Eve should be also the germ and offset of Abraham. The primitive traditions are soon succeeded by the grand prophecy of Jacob. The dying patriarch, who has beheld in spirit the condition of the twelve tribes when they shall have been in

(1) "An unanimous testimony is of the greatest weight," says Bernardine de St. Pierre, "for there cannot be upon the earth an universal error."—(Etudes de la Nature, étude viii. p. 398.)

(2) It is a tradition taught in the synagogue, and admitted as true by the Church, that all the prophets, without one exception, prophesied solely for the time of the Messias.—(St. Cypr. de Vanit. Idol.)

(3) Basnage, t. iv. liv. vii.

(4) Epist. St. P. ad Hebr. ii.

Palestine, announces to his sons, assembled round his death-bed, that Juda has been chosen, among all his brethren, to be the stock of the kings of Israel, and the father of that *Shiloh* so often promised, who is to be the King of kings, and the Lord of lords. The coming of Christ is designated in a precise manner: he shall spring up from the midst of the ruins of his country, when the *schebet* (the sceptre, the legislative authority) shall be in the hands of the stranger.[1]

The prophet saved from the waters, who was divinely called to collect and consign to writing the history of the first ages and ancient traditions of the human race,—traditions, the memory of which was still fresh among the nations,—does not fail to lend the support of his imposing testimony to the prophecy of Jacob: "The Lord thy God," said he, speaking to the people of God, "will raise up to thee a prophet of thy nation, and of thy brethren, like unto me: him thou shalt hear. And he that will not hear his words which he shall speak in my name, I will be the revenger."[2]

(1) Christians apply this revelation of Jacob to the Messias, and prove from it to the Jews that he must have come long ago, since for eighteen centuries their tribes have been intermixed, their sacrifices abolished, their political existence extinct; that they no longer possess a territory, nor princes of their nation, and that in all the places where they are dispersed they submit to the laws of foreign nations. To elude the force of this argument, the Jews maintain now a days, that the word *schebet*, which we translate by sceptre, equally signifies the rod which chastises the slave; and they set out from this to maintain that, even if this oracle did refer to the Messias, all that could be concluded from it would be that their chastisement would endure till his coming, who was to deliver them from it. In fine, they deny that the word *Shiloh* can be translated Messias. But their ancient books contradict them; this prophecy is understood of the Messias in the Talmud; and this is how the Paraphrase of Onkelos explains this passage: "Juda shall not be without some one invested with supreme authority, nor without scribes of the sons of her children, till the Messias shall come." Jonathan, to whom the Jews assign the first place among the disciples of Hillel, and whom they reverence almost as Moses, translates *schebet* in the same way by principality, and *Shiloh* by Messias; the Paraphrase of Jerusalem also adopts this opinion. Thus the most ancient, most authentic, and most respectable commentaries among them, supply victorious arms wherewith to combat them.

(2) Hence comes that hope of a new law which the Jews expect with the

Now the synagogue always understood this very clear text as referring to the Messias; St. Philip applies it, without hesitation, to our divine Redeemer when he says to Nathanael, "We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus the son of Joseph of Nazareth."

Towards the end of the mission of Moses, and whilst Israel were still encamped in the desert, Balaam, whose curses a Moabite prince had bargained for in the Valley of Willows,[1] came in his turn to confirm the expectation of the Messias, and to designate in a clear and precise manner the great epoch of his coming. Standing upon the rocky summit of Phogor, surrounded by victims slain for a sacrifice of hatred, in sight of the accursed lake and the barren mountains of Arabia, the soothsayer from the banks of the Euphrates, moved by the spirit of God, perceives, as with the eye of a dream,[2] a wonderful vision; his expressions, interrupted by solemn pauses, are thrown out without order and without art upon the winds of the mountains, like fragments of some mysterious conversation held in a low tone with powers invisible: "I shall see him, but not now. I shall behold him, but not near. A star shall rise out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall spring up from Israel, and shall strike the chiefs of Moab." Incoherent words are followed by a magnificent but gloomy picture of the conquests of the kingly people. It is not without purpose that the prophetic vision exhibits Rome at the highest point of its colossal power; then it is that Christ is to visit the

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Messias, a law which they place far above that of Moses. "The law which man studies in this world is but vanity," say their doctors, "in comparison with that of Moses."—(Medrasch-Rabba, in Eccl. xi. 8.)

(1) The plain of Babylon, intersected by rivers and canals, and on that account very marshy, abounded in willows. Hence it is called in Scripture the "Valley of Willows."

(2) If we did not know that the prophecy of Balaam is very ancient, the very manner in which it is made would sufficiently indicate it. Balaam, the Chaldean astrologer, does not prophesy like the *seers* of Juda; he requires a vast horizon, whence he perceives at once the earth, the sea, and the sky; he expresses himself like a man who relates to himself the things that he sees at the moment when he speaks, and which make the strongest impression upon him. This kind of prophecy somewhat resembles what the Scotch highlanders call *second sight.*

earth, and immolate himself for us upon the disgraceful tree. The prophet paints this epoch of blood in strong colours; one would say that cities and empires yet unborn present themselves to him on the mirage of the desert. He beholds the fleet of the Cæsars leaving the ports of Italy, and directing its prows, favoured by victory, towards the flat shores of the Syrians; he sees the ruin of that Judea which is not to be in existence till long after, and where the people of God as yet possess nothing but a few sepulchres which they can call their own; in fine, he follows with his eye the fall of the Roman eagle, seven hundred years before the birth of the sons of Ilia, and when the wild goats of Latium are browsing peacefully upon the shrubby declivities of the seven hills.

Ages roll on, and other ages after them, without any other promises from Jehovah; but the oracles relating to the Messias are confided to tradition, which retains them faithfully, or deposited in the sacred law. Israel maintains an obscure contest, but one incessant and furious, against those idolatrous nations which surround and press upon his tribes; at times he gives way to that strange propensity which draws him into idolatry, and then the fatal sword of the Amorrhite and the Moabite is unconsciously drawn in the Lord's cause, and avenges unintentionally the injury done to the God of Jacob. But during these varied fortunes, the people do not forget the coming of Christ; they live in the faith of the Messias; in default of new revelations, their very life becomes prophetic. Institutions, political and religious, local customs and private manners all tend to the same object, all flow from the same source, all are connected with the generation of the Saviour, born of a virgin of Juda. It was the coming of the Messias, which the prophet Samuel came to pray for on his knees, in the holy of holies, before the *Schekina*, his bright and divine emblem; as did also the high priests, who succeeded one after another, later on, in the temple of Solomon. It is with the expectation of the Messias that that law of Deuteronomy is connected, which provides that the brother shall raise up a heir to his brother who has died without children, that

his name may be preserved in Israel. It is that lost hope of being related one day, more or less remotely, to that heavenly envoy, which causes that young and meek virgin of Galaad to lament on the mountains of Judea, who carries with her no other regret to the blood-stained sepulchre where her father's race has become extinct.[1] It is to this belief, so general among the Hebrews, that the Thecuite woman alludes, when denouncing to King David the secret plot which was contriving against her sole surviving son; she poetizes her fears as a mother, and at the same time a Jewish matron, by that touching sentence, "My lord, they seek to quench my spark which is left!"

Nothing but the present incredulity of the Jews could equal in depth the faith of their ancestors. The great concern of those men of ancient times was the coming of the Messias; those who died at a period still so remote from that in which the divine promises were to be accomplished, died in the firm persuasion that they would be one day fulfilled; on the threshold of eternity they hailed that hope from afar off, as Moses, the great prophet, hailed, with a sigh, that "land of milk and honey" which the Lord closed against him.

From the time of David, and under the kings his children, the thread of prophecy is joined again, and the mystery of the Virgin and the Messias is more than ever declared by predictions magnificent and clearer than the sun.

The holy king, whom the God of Israel had preferred to the race of Saul, sees the virginity of Mary, and the extraordinary birth of the Son of God. *Thy birth*, says he, not defiled, like that of the children of men, *shall be pure as the morning dew.* Then, lifting up his eyes on high, he beholds Him whom God has

(1) Some rabbins maintain that the daughter of Jephte was not sacrificed, but merely condemned to perpetual celibacy. This assertion is contradicted by that text of Scripture which says: "That from year to year the daughters of Israel assemble together, and lament the daughter of Jephte, the Galaadite, for four days."—(Judges xi. 40.) People do not mourn for a person living. Flavius Josephus also affirms the immolation of the daughter of Jephte.—(Ant. Jud., t. ii. lib. v. c. 9.)

given him for his son according to the flesh, seated on the right hand of Jehovah, on a throne more durable than the heavens and the stars.

In the earlier prophecies, the Blessed Virgin, though always pointed out, was nevertheless a little in the shade, and, so to speak, in the background of the picture; but from the days of David, the radiant form of Mary no longer presents features so irregular, and she who was to cause the blood of Abraham, of Jacob, and of Jesse the Just to flow in the veins of the God-Man, is delineated more exactly. David had spoken of her virginal parturition. Solomon delighted in tracing her image with sweet strokes of the pencil, which leave far behind the graceful descriptions of the peris of the East, those smiling and airy divinities which cross the dreams of the shepherd of Arabia. He sees her rising up in the midst of the daughters of Juda, "as a lily among thorns;" her eyes are sweet and soft, "like those of doves;" from her lips, red "as a scarlet lace," proceeds a voice pure and melodious, like the sound of harps exciting Israel to the combat; her step is light "as the smoke of perfumes," and her beauty rivals in splendour "the rising moon." Her tastes are simple and full of poetry; she loves to stray in the fresh valleys, "where the vines are in blossom," and the figs appear in knots, like emeralds, on the leafless branches; her eyes perceive the red buds of the pomegranate, the tree of Paradise,[1] and she delights in listening to the plaintive strain of the turtle. Silent and retired, she withdraws from the sight of all, and hides herself in her dwelling, like the dove "which makes its nest in the clefts of the rock." She is chosen for a mystical hymen, in preference to the virgins and queens of all nations; a crown is promised to her by Him "whom her soul loveth," and the happy band which unites her to her royal spouse "is stronger than death."[2]

Elias, in prayer on Mount Carmel, to obtain the end of that

(1) The orientals give the pomegranate the name oı "fruit of Paradise."

(2) All the holy fathers notice that the "Canticle of Canticles" is only a continued allegory of the Mother of God.

long drought which for three years parches the earth and dries up the springs, discovers the promised Virgin, under the form of a transparent cloud, which rises from the bosom of the waters to announce the return of rain. The blessings of the people hail this favourable augury,[1] and the prophet, who penetrates into divine things, builds an oratory to the future Queen of Heaven.[2] Isaias declares to the house of David, whose chief, Achab, trembles under the threats of the stranger, "like a forest beaten down by a tempest," that God will give an encouraging sign of the future condition of Judea—a future to be yet long and glorious. "A virgin shall conceive;[3] she shall bring forth a

(1) When rain falls in Palestine, there is general joy among the people; they assemble in the streets, they sing, they are full of agitation, and cry out as loud as they can, "O God! O blessed!"—(Volney, Voyage en Syrie.)

(2) The oratory which Elias erected on Mount Carmel was dedicated by him to the Virgin who was to bring forth, *Virgini pariturœ.* This chapel was called *Semnœum,* which means a place consecrated to an *empress,* who can be no other than Mary, the *Empress* of heaven and earth.—(Hist. du Mont Carmel, succession du Saint Prophète, c. 31.)

(3) This great oracle of Isaias has been the subject of a long and perplexing dispute between the Jews and the Christians. The rabbins, who have commented on the text since Jesus Christ, anxious to change the nature of the proofs which condemn them, and obscure the words of the prophet, have contended that the word *halma,* which is found in the Hebrew text, signifies merely a young woman, although the Septuagint has translated it by *virgin.* The fathers have triumphantly refuted this objection. "The seventy interpreters," says St. John Chrysostom, "are they who most deserve credit; they made their version more than a century before Jesus Christ; they were many together; their time, their number, and their union render them far more worthy of credit than the Jews of our days, who have maliciously corrupted many places of the holy Scriptures."—(St. Joan. Chrys., Serm. 4, c. i.) St. Jerom, the most profound Hebrew scholar of all the interpreters and all the commentators of Scripture, pronounces, as he says, without fear of contradiction from the Jews, that *halma,* wherever the word occurs in the divine Scriptures, signifies exclusively a virgin in all her innocence, and nowhere a married woman.—(Comm. St. Hieron. in Is., lib. iii.) Luther, who made so deplorable use of really great learning, cries out with the fury and vehemence for which he is so well known: "If any Jew or Hebraist can show me that *halma* signifies in any place *a woman of any kind,* and not a virgin, he shall have from me one hundred florins, if please God I can find them."—(Œuvres de Luther, t. viii. p. 129.) Mahomet himself has borne testimony to the virginity of the Mother of God. "And Mary, daughter of Imram, who has kept her virginity; and we have sent of our spirit into her, and she has believed the words of her Lord and his Scriptures."—(Koran, Surate 66.)

son, and his name shall be called *Emmanuel*, that is, God with us. This child, miraculously given to the earth, shall be an offset from the stock of Jesse, a flower sprung from his root.[1] He shall be called God, the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of peace. He shall stand for an ensign of people, him the Gentiles shall beseech, and his sepulchre shall be glorious."

The mystery of the Messias was entirely unveiled to the prophets; some of them see Bethlehem rendered illustrious by his birth; others foretell his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, and even describe the peaceful and slow-paced animal on which he rides. They see him enter the temple, that sacred priest according to the order of Melchisedech; they know the number of pieces of silver which the butchers of the synagogue will drop into the hand of the base wretch who sells his master to them;[2] they see the punishment of slaves, the draught of gall offered to the agony of a God, and the robe, woven by the hands of a Mother, cast lots for by rude soldiers; they hear the nails which tear the bleeding flesh, and are driven with a harsh, rough sound into the accursed wood. And then the scene changes, like those pictures of Raphael, where the subject begun upon the earth is continued beyond the clouds. The Man of Sorrows, the humble Messias, whom his own relations have treated with scorn, whom his own people have not known, looks down from the highest heavens upon his prostrate enemies: all the nations of the earth remember their God, forgotten for so many ages! The nations rally at the standard of the cross, and the empire of Christ shall have no bounds but those of the world. Nothing is wanting to the completion of the prophecies: Jacob has determined the

(1) Jesse, called also Isai, was the son of Obed and father of David. His memory is in high veneration among the Hebrews, who regard him as an accomplished just one.

(2) This passage, in which God himself states the exact number of pieces of silver of this infamous compact, bears the impress of bitter and terrible irony. "And the Lord said to me: Cast it to the statuary, a goodly price that I was prised at by them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver," &c.—(Zach. xi. 13.)

coming of the *Shiloh* at that precise moment when the Jews shall cease to be governed by their own laws, which implies the ruin of a state; Balaam adds that this ruin will be the work of a people come from Italy, and the satrap Daniel reckons up precisely the weeks which are to elapse to that time.

"All that happens in the world has its sign before it," as a man of genius has said, who now remains so solitary and so formidable beneath his tent. "When the sun is about to rise, the horizon is tinted with a thousand colours, and the east appears all on fire. When the tempest comes, a dull murmur is heard on the shore, and the waves are agitated as if by themselves." The figures of the Old Testament, as the fathers of the Church acknowledge, are the signs which announce the rising of the *Sun of Justice* and of the *Star of the Sea.* To Christ, the Son of God, belongs power; to Mary, grace and merciful goodness. She is the tree of life replanted in the abodes of men by the hands of God himself, and the earnest of a happiness preferable to that which our first parents enjoyed in Eden; the dove of the ark which brings the olive branch to the earth; the fountain sealed up, the waters of which have not been defiled by anything impure; the fleece which receives the dew from heaven; in fine, the frail and odoriferous bush of wild roses through which Moses perceived the Deity—the bush, which so far from being consumed by fire, which destroys all things, was in some measure preserved by it, and lost neither leaf nor flower from contact with the heavenly flame.[1]

Like that enchanting figure which an antique painter formerly composed, by borrowing a thousand scattered traits from the most beautiful women of Greece, the chaste spouse of the Holy Ghost

(1) Philo, who has made this remark, and who discovers in this burning bush a mysterious allegory, applies it erroneously to the Jewish nation by forced resemblances. Josephus, who sought in like manner to understand this mystery, has succeeded no better. Those wild roses, emblematical of chaste virgins who diffuse their modest perfume in solitude, and whom the contact of the Divinity causes to shine without prejudice to the holy purity of their white and delicate blossom, are the most striking image of Mary, that mystical Rose of the new law.

repeated in her single person all that the most celebrated women of the old law had offered to the admiration of their contemporaries. Beautiful as Rachel and Sarah, she knew how to unite the prudence of Abigail with the courageous resolution of Esther. Susanna, chaste as the flower of which she bore the name;[1] Judith, whose crown of lilies was stained with the blood of Holophernes;[2] Axa, whose hand was the prize for a conquered city; and that mother, so great and so unfortunate, who saw all her sons die for the law,—were but faint images of her who was to unite in herself all the perfections of woman and angel.

After an expectation of four thousand years, the time marked out by so many prophecies arrives at last; the shadows of the old law disappear, and Mary arises in the horizon of Judea, like the star which is the harbinger of day.

CHAPTER II.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

A WOMAN destined from all eternity to be the means of saving the world by deifying our nature, and to contain in her chaste womb HIM whose "tabernacle is the sun, and who bows the heavens beneath his feet"—a woman expected from the creation of the globe, revealed by God himself in Paradise, and the avowed end of all the holy generations who have succeeded one after the other from the days of the patriarchs,[3] can be no ordinary creature, and

(1) The name of Susanna signifies *lily*.—(Favyn, ii. 2.)

(2) The ancients attributed to *lilies* the power of neutralizing enchantments and averting dangers. "Judith bound her forehead," say the rabbins, "with a wreath of lilies, that she might make her way into the tent of Holophernes without fear."—(Comm. RR. in Judith.)

(3) According to St. Augustin, the progeny to which all the patriarchs aspire is Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ in Mary, to whom alone their fecundity could extend. "And in fact," says he, "if nature in all her efforts tends to Jesus

must have prerogatives superior to humanity. The pious belief in the immaculate conception of Mary flows from this feeling of reverence. Descendants of an unfortunate head,—degraded by our rebellious father, disgraced by the sentence which condemns him, instead of receiving from him the life of grace, we have received from him the death of sin, and, by a fearful destiny, we are condemned before we are born. This misery, inherent in the human race, cursed as one man in its origin, is common to all, and the Scripture has made no exception in favour of any child of Adam; but the piety of the faithful could not bear the idea that the Mother of God should be subject to the disgraceful condemnation which marks us with the seal of hell in the wombs of our mothers; they have been persuaded that the Sovereign Judge must have suspended the general effect of his severe law in favour of her who came into the world for no other purpose than to contribute to the accomplishment of the most secret, most incomprehensible of the counsels of God—the incarnation of the Messias. Notwithstanding the silence of the gospel, it has been generally believed that the Virgin, with a view to her divine maternity, was held back, as it were, on the brink of the abyss which the fatal disobedience of our first parents opened under our feet, and that her conception was immaculate as her life.

This belief, which the Greeks borrowed from Palestine, and adopted with enthusiasm,[1] led to the institution of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, which was celebrated with great

Christ, who is the Lord of ages, it is not that she flatters herself that she shall attain to the Son of God by her own power alone; the extent of her power stops at the humble Mary, who is to bring forth the blessed germ, not by the power of her forefathers, but by the virtue of the Most High."—(St. Augustin, 5, contr. Jul. 9.)

(1) We read in the Menologies, so ancient in the use of the Greeks, these words, which clearly set forth their belief in the mystery of the immaculate conception:—"By a particular providence, the Lord was pleased that the Blessed Virgin should be as pure, from the first moment of her life, as it became her who was to become worthy to conceive and bring forth Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh."

pomp at Constantinople as early as the sixth century.[1] In the West, on the other hand, this doctrine met with opponents, and powerful ones; for St. Anselm, St. Bernard, St. Bonaventure, St. Thomas of Aquin, Albert the Great, and many other learned and wise personages, all great theologians, and what is more, very devout to Mary, maintained that she had been conceived in sin, and subject to the general law,[2] although shortly after she had been entirely purified from it, by a special and surpassing favour, which began her glorious state of Mother of God.

But the belief in the immaculate conception of the holy Virgin prevailed in the end over the opinion of the great doctors of the middle ages; what the eagles of the schools had not seen was discovered to the unlearned. The writings of the apostles and doctors were turned over afresh; what they have bequeathed to us from age to age concerning the grandeurs of Mary was more scrupulously examined, and this research caused strong light to fall on this obscure point of the history of the Mother of Christ.

And, in fact, when we go back to the apostles, we already see the title of most holy and *immaculate* applied to Mary.[3] The apostle St. Andrew, quoted by the Babylonian Abdias, expresses himself in these terms:—"As the first Adam was made of the earth before it was cursed, so the second Adam was formed of virgin earth which was never cursed."

The saints and martyrs who lived in the third century, St.

(1) St. Andrew of Crete makes mention of this Feast of the Immaculate Conception, the office of which had been composed by St. Sabbas, to which St. Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople, added an antiphon.

(2) The adversaries of the immaculate conception glory in reckoning in their ranks St. Anselm, St. Bernard, St. Bonaventure, St. Thomas, Albert the Great, &c. Great as these names are, we must not allow ourselves to be dazzled by them; for by comparing these doctors with themselves, we find that they positively maintained opinions both *for and against*, which shows that their opinion was not decided on this point, or else that they had strange distractions.

(3) St. James the Great and St. Mark, in their Liturgies.

Hippolytus,[1] Origen,[2] St. Dionysius of Alexandria,[3] give to the holy Virgin the qualification of "pure" and "immaculate." St. Cyprian[4] is more precise, and says plainly that "there is a very great difference between the rest of mortals and the Virgin, and that all she has in common with them is their nature, and not their fault."

In the fourth century St. Ambrose, who compares the Virgin to "a straight and shining stem, where there was never found the knot of original, or the bark of actual sin;"[5] St. John Chrysostom,[6] who proclaims her "most holy, *immaculate*, blessed above all creatures;" St. Jerom,[7] who poetically makes her "the cloud of the day which never knew darkness;" St. Basil,[8] whose footsteps the defenders of the immaculate conception have always gloried in following,—have never varied as to that purity of the lily which applies so well to the queen of angels.

In the fifth century, St. Augustin[9] cannot bear that even the name of Mary should be mentioned when there is any question of sin; and St. Peter Chrysologus[10] affirms that "all have been saved in the Virgin."

St. Fulgentius, who lived at the beginning of the sixth century, says that the "holy Virgin was entirely excepted from the primeval sentence."[11] "It is wrong," says St. Ildefonsus,[12]

(1) St. Hipp. in an oration "On the Consummation of the World."

(2) Orig. Hom. in St. Matt.

(3) St. Dion. in an epistle mentioned in the Biblioth. des PP.

(4) St. Cypr., de Nat. Virg.

(5) "Virgo in qua nec nodus originalis, nec cortex actualis culpæ fuit."—(St. Ambr., de Inst. Virg., c. v.)

(6) St. J. Chrysostom, in his Liturgy.

(7) Commentaries of St. Jerom on Ps. lxxvii. "Deduxit eos in nube diei: nubes est beata Virgo, quæ pulchre dicitur nubes diei, quia non fuit in tenebris, sed semper in luce."

(8) St. Basil, in his Liturgy.

(9) It must be observed that St. Augustin was then defending the doctrine of original sin against the Pelagians.

(10) St. Peter Chrysol., de Annunciat., Serm. 140.

(11) St. Fulg., Serm. de laudibus Mariæ.—Serm. de duab. nat. Jesu Christi.

(12) St. Ildefonsus, in his book De Virginit. Mariæ.

Archbishop of Toledo, who flourished in the same century, "to seek to subject the mother of God to the laws of nature; it is manifest that she was free from original sin, and that she removed the malediction of Eve." St. John Damascen,[1] speaking expressly of her conception, says that she was "pure and *immaculate*." In the ninth century Theophanes, Abbot of Grandchamp; in the tenth, St. Fulbert, Bishop of Chartres; towards the middle of the eleventh, Yvo,[2] one of the most shining lights of that time, and, a little later, St. Bruno,[3] founder of the Carthusians, are evidently in favour of the immaculate conception of the Blessed Virgin.

Islamism itself declares for the immaculate conception, and the Arab commentators on the Koran have adopted, in their way, the opinion of those Catholic divines who have declared themselves for that doctrine. "Every descendant of Adam," says Cottada, "from the moment of his coming into the world, is touched in the side by Satan: Jesus and Mary, however, must be excepted; for God placed a veil between them and Satan, which preserved them from his fatal contact."

These testimonies in favour of the immaculate conception of Mary become more feeble and less abundant in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; few authors of note wrote then in this sense, and many men eminent for their learning and sanctity maintained the contrary opinion. To make up for this, the Feast of the Conception of the Virgin was established in several kingdoms.

William the Conqueror established this feast in Normandy as early as 1074; and from the reign of Henry I., his son, King of England, and Duke of Normandy, it was celebrated at Rouen

(1) St. J. Damascen, De Nativ. Mariæ., Or. 1ᵃ.

(2) The two holy bishops of Chartres, Fulbert and Yvo, declared themselves in favour of the immaculate conception. Yvo maintained it in the pulpit, and Fulbert says in his Paraphrase on the Angelical Salutation to the Virgin, "Ave, Maria, electa et insignis inter filias, quæ immaculata semper extitisti ab exordio tuæ creationis, quia paritura eras Creatorem totius sanctitatis."

(3) St. Bruno, in his explanation of these words of Ps. ci., "Dominus de cœlo in terram aspexit," which he applies to the Blessed Virgin.

with extraordinary solemnity. "It was instituted," say the ancient chroniclers, "on account of the holy apparition made to an abbot worthy of credit, who had encountered the perils of the sea during a tempest." An old history of the antiquities of Rouen adds, that "from the very time of the institution of the feast, an association was founded of the most respectable personages of the town, who still elect every year one of their number to be the prince of the confraternity, who, holding the *puy*, or platform for all speakers, in all languages, gives excellent and valuable prizes to those who most elegantly, faithfully, and appropriately shall have celebrated the praise of the Virgin Mary on the subject of her holy conception, by hymns, odes, sonnets, ballads, royal songs," &c.[1]

Thus the Virgin, full of grace, presided over the revival of poetry, and her immaculate conception furnished pious subjects for the country of the minstrels.

From Normandy the Feast of the Conception of the Virgin came amongst the English. The first council of Oxford, held by Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, in the year 1222, places it in the number of holidays kept without servile work. In France, in the year 1288, a bishop of Paris, Renoul de Hombiere, left by his will a considerable sum to found the office of this Feast of the Holy Virgin, which was introduced at the same time in the Lyonnais. In fine, a manuscript martyrology of the thirteenth century, found in the library of the Dominicans of Dijon, marks the Feast of the Conception of our Lady on the 8th of December; "which shows plainly enough," say the learned Benedictines who have read this ancient MS., "that this feast was already celebrated almost everywhere in the church in the time of St. Dominic."

The doctrine of the immaculate conception had been banished from the pulpits and schools for a long space of time, when certain divines, who had been convinced that this belief came down from the highest and purest sources of Christianity, under-

(1) Antiquités et Singularités de la ville de Rouen, by N. Taillepied, D.D.

took to revive it. The Franciscans, who first began to make public profession of it, by writing[1] and word of mouth, supported it by reasons so strong and convincing that not only the mass of the faithful, but the most learned bodies in Europe adhered to it with enthusiasm. The Sorbonne, which was then called the "firmament of science, the support of truth and piety in the Church of God," ordained that all who should be promoted to the degree of doctor should engage upon oath to maintain this religious belief.[2] This was done successively by the universities of Mentz, Cologne, Valentia, Alcala, Coimbra, Salamanca, and Naples.

Among those religious orders who did honour to France for so many centuries, the Dominicans alone, or nearly alone, showed themselves hostile to the pious doctrine of the immaculate conception; but the learned Benedictines, who are held in veneration by the Protestants themselves for their immense scientific labours; the Carthusians, the Carmelites, the Order of St. Augustin, of Cluny, of Citeaux, of the Premonstratensians, and a multitude of others, whom it would be tedious to enumerate here, adhered with enlightened piety, ardent zeal, and profound conviction to the doctrine of the immaculate conception.

Councils have been favourable to this belief. That of Basle, in its session of 27th of September, 1429, says that, "the doctrine which teaches that the glorious Virgin Mary was conceived without sin is a pious doctrine, conformable to the worship of the Church, to Catholic faith, to right reason, and to Holy Scripture."[3]

(1) Montfaucon, who travelled through Italy about the year 1698, having paid a visit at Pavia to the library of the Chevalier Beleridus, renowned for his piety, was much surprised to see that this immense collection of books was entirely composed of treatises written by the Franciscans in defence of the immaculate conception.

(2) The decree of the Sorbonne is as follows:—"We decree and declare that no one shall be admitted in future into our faculty without promising on oath to defend all his life this doctrine of the immaculate conception." "Statuentes ut nemo deinceps huic nostro collegio adscribatur, nisi se hujus doctrinæ assertorem semper pro viribus futurum, simili juramento, profiteatur."

(3) "There has arisen in this holy council (that of Basle) a difficult question on

The Council of Avignon confirmed, in 1457, the decree of the Council of Basle; and in their session of 1564 [1] the fathers of the Council of Trent declared that, in the decree which they had made in 1546, on original sin, they had never intended to include the blessed and *immaculate* Mother of God.

Notwithstanding the prudent reserve which the Holy See prescribed to itself in an affair where famous doctors and illustrious divines appeared on both sides, it could not help making it appear to which side its sympathies leaned. From the year 1483, Pope Sixtus IV. had expressly forbidden any disputation in pulpits and schools upon the conception of Our Lady.[2] This might be

the conception of the glorious Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and on the commencement of her sanctification; some saying that her soul was for some time, or at least for some moments, actually subject to original sin; others maintaining, on the contrary, that the love which God had for her extended to the first moment of her creation; that the Most High, who himself established her, and the Son, who formed her to be his mother upon earth, loaded her with singular and extraordinary graces; that Jesus Christ redeemed her in a superior and quite peculiar manner, by preserving her from the original stain, and sanctifying her in the first moment of her conception. Having therefore examined discreetly the reasons and authorities which, for several years, have been alleged on one side and the other, in the public acts of this holy council—having moreover given attention to many other things on the same subject—all being weighed and maturely considered, we decide and declare that the doctrine which teaches that the glorious Virgin Mary, Mother of God, by a special favour, and by a prevenient and operative grace, was never subject to original sin, but that she was always holy, immaculate, and exempt from all sin, original and actual; we declare that the doctrine which teaches all this is a pious doctrine, conformable to the worship of the Church, to the Catholic faith, to right reason, and to the Holy Scripture; and that as such it ought to be approved, held, and followed by all Catholics, so that it may not be lawful for any one henceforth to preach or teach the contrary. Renewing, moreover, the institution of the Feast of the Holy Conception, which, by an ancient and laudable custom, is celebrated on the eighth day of December, both at Rome and in other churches, we will and ordain that this feast be celebrated on the same day, under the name of the Conception of the Virgin, in all churches, monasteries, and communities of the Catholic religion, and that the faithful express themselves upon it in canticles of praise and joy." The council attaches even indulgences to this solemnity.

(1) "Declarat hæc sancta synodus non esse intentionis suæ comprehendere in hoc decreto, ubi de peccato originali agitur, beatam et IMMACULATAM Dei genitricem."—(Concil. Trid. Sess. v. 1546.)

(2) See the Constitution of Sixtus IV., which begins by "Grave nimis."

taken for a simple act of neutrality if this pontiff had not approved of the Office of the Conception, composed by a religious of Verona, and granted an indulgence of a hundred days to all who should assist at it.[1] The successors of this great pope uniformly trod in the path which he had struck out and followed. In 1506, Cardinal Ximenes established in Spain, with the consent of Pope Julius II., a confraternity of the Conception. The same pope confirmed by a brief dated 17th of September, 1511, an Order of religious women founded under the same title by Innocent VIII.[2] In the hymns which Zachary, Bishop of Gordia, composed by order of Leo X. and Clement VII., it is said that Our Lady was created in a state of grace. In 1569, Pope Pius V. granted permission to the Franciscans to celebrate the Office of the Immaculate Conception, attaching to it the same indulgences as to the feast of the Blessed Sacrament. Paul V., by a bull in the year 1616, forbid any one to maintain, in public lectures, the contrary opinion to that of the immaculate conception; and Gregory XV., in 1622, extended this prohibition even to private discourses and particular conversations. It only remained for the popes to celebrate this feast in Rome itself, and this was done by Alexander VII., in 1661. It results from this conduct of the Holy See, that all its sympathies are on the side of the doctrine of the immaculate conception. Nevertheless, it would not condemn the contrary opinion, doubtless out of regard for high and holy names.

One voice of immense weight, the great voice of Bossuet, has been heard in this cause; the *buckler of religion* has been nobly held up before the Blessed Virgin. "The opinion of the immaculate conception," says he, "has an indescribable power to persuade pious souls. Next to the articles of faith, I see hardly anything more certain. Hence I am not surprised that this

(1) See the Constitution of Sixtus IV., beginning with "Cum præexcelsa . . . Extrav. commun."

(2) In this Order of the Immaculate Conception, each sister consecrated herself expressly to this mystery by these words, which are by no means ambiguous: "I, Sister N——, for the love and service of Jesus Christ our Lord, and of the immaculate conception of his Blessed Mother, promise," &c.

school of divines of Paris should oblige all her children to defend this doctrine. For my own part, I am delighted in these days to follow up her intentions. After having been fed with her milk, I willingly submit to her decrees, and the more so as they are, as it appears to me, the will of the church: she has a most honourable opinion of the conception of Mary; she does not oblige us to believe it to have been *immaculate,* but she gives us to understand that such belief is pleasing to her. There are things which she commands, in which we make known our obedience; there are others which she insinuates, where we may testify our affection. It becomes our piety, if we are true children of the church, not only to obey the commandments, but to bend to the smallest signs of the will of a mother so good and so sacred."[1]

Devotion to the immaculate conception of the Virgin was popular in Western Europe from the middle ages—that is certain; and since then it has made immense progress: but be it said, without offence to France and Italy—those two nations so eminently devout to the Virgin—Spain has shown the greatest zeal and ardour in the propagation of this doctrine. The church of Spain, protesting against the pretensions of the church of Normandy, which claims the institution of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady in the West, professes to have celebrated it in the seventh century;[2]—what is certain is, that in 1394, Don John I. of Arragon, who instituted it, by his royal authority, in the several provinces of Spain which had shaken off the yoke of Islamism, affirms that many of his predecessors had celebrated this feast before him.[3] We shall not decide between the two

(1) Bossuet, On the Conception.

(2) "La Iglesia Española fué la primera que celebró la Inmaculada Concepcion de la santisima Virgen; cuya festa tuvo lugar en ella desde el siglo septimo." —(El maestro Villados, en el cap. *de los Festiv. Ecles,* t. i. part 2.)

(3) The following is the decree of Don Juan I., of Arragon :—

"We, Don Juan, by the grace of God King of Arragon and Valentia, &c.—Why are some persons astonished that the Blessed Mary, Mother of God, should have been conceived without original sin, while we doubt not that St. John Baptist was sanctified in his mother's womb by that same God, who, coming from the highest heaven, and from the throne of the most Holy Trinity, was made flesh

churches; but if the church of Spain has only doubtful claims to the institution of this feast of Mary, which was called in France and England *the Feast of the Normans*, she cannot be denied the honour of having been the first to erect churches and altars under the title of the Mystery of the Immaculate Conception. As early as the year 1525, the Spaniards of Mexico placed the splendid cathedral of Puebla de los Angelos under the invocation of the

in the blessed womb of a virgin? What graces do we think the Lord could refuse to the woman who gave birth to him by the splendid prodigy of her fruitful virginity? Loving his mother as he loves her, he must have surrounded her conception, her nativity, and the other phases of her life, with the most glorious privileges.

"Why call in question the conception of a virgin so privileged, and of whom the Catholic faith obliges us to believe grandeurs and wonders which we cannot sufficiently admire? Is it not a much greater subject of admiration for all Christians to see that a creature has given birth to her Creator, and that she became a mother without ceasing to be a virgin? How then shall the human mind suffice to praise this glorious Virgin, whom the Almighty predestined to possess, without the least corruption, the advantages of the divine maternity, conjointly with the glory of the purest virginity; and to be exalted above all the prophets, all the saints, and all the choirs of angels, as their queen? Could there then have been wanting any purity and any grace to that excellent Virgin in the first moment of her conception, so that the stain of original sin might have been imputed to her—her to whom the angel of the Lord sent from heaven spoke these words, 'Hail, Mary, full of grace! the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women!' Let then those who speak thus improperly hold their peace: let those who have nothing but vain and frivolous arguments to propose against the immaculate conception, so privileged and so pure, of the Blessed Virgin, be ashamed to publish them, because it was fitting that she should be endowed with so great purity, that next to that of God, none like it could be imagined. It is indeed fitting that she who had for her Son the Creator and Father of all things should have been, and should be ever, most pure and most perfect, having from the beginning and before all ages, by an eternal decree of God, been chosen among all creatures to contain in her womb Him whom the whole world and the whole immensity of the heavens cannot contain.

"But we, who among all Catholic kings have received from this Mother of Mercies so many graces and benefits without having deserved them, we firmly believe that the Conception of this Blessed Virgin, in whose womb the Son of God vouchsafed to be made man, was entirely holy and immaculate.

"Thus we honour with a pure heart the mystery of this immaculate and blessed conception of the most holy Virgin, Mother of God; and we, and all those of the royal family, celebrate the festival of it every year with solemnity, in the same manner as our most illustrious predecessors of glorious memory have celebrated it, having had established for it a perpetual confraternity. Wherefore

immaculate Virgin, whose holy image glittered with precious stones upon an altar of massive silver, surrounded by a forest of elegant columns, with plinths and capitals of burnished gold. The faithful of Mexico erected an altar and a statue to her in their metropolitan church with true Peruvian magnificence. A little later, the Mexican cathedrals of Merida, Maracaïbo, and Nabana, were founded under the invocation of the immaculate Virgin, and Peru did not remain behind. This striking adherence to the doctrine of the conception without sin was yet not sufficient

we ordain that this Feast of the Immaculate Conception shall be celebrated annually for ever, with great solemnity and respect, in all the kingdoms of our obedience, by all the Catholic faithful, whether religious or secular, priests or others, of whatever state or condition they may be; and that henceforth it shall not be lawful, and we even forbid all preachers, and all those who publicly lecture on the gospel, to say anything, to publish and advance anything, which in any way whatever might prejudice or be injurious to the purity and sanctity of this blessed conception; but, on the contrary, we ordain that preachers and other persons who have had opposite opinions shall keep strict silence, since the Catholic faith does not place us in any necessity of maintaining and professing the contrary opinion; and that others who hold our holy and salutary opinion in their heart shall publish it in their discourses, and eagerly testify their devotion by celebrating, by the praises of the Most High, the glory and honour of his holy Mother, who is the Queen of heaven, the gate of Paradise;—she who has care of our souls, the secure haven of salvation, and the anchor of hope of all sinners who have confidence in her. By the tenor of these presents we expressly establish, in perpetuity, that if it happens in future that any preacher, or any other person among our subjects, of what state or condition soever he may be, does not observe this ordinance, without any necessity for any other decree from us, let him be banished from his convent or house; and while he remains in this contrary opinion, let him depart as our enemy from the whole extent of our kingdoms. Willing also and ordering, of our knowledge and mature deliberation, under pain of incurring our anger and indignation, all and each of our officers, who are on this side and beyond the sea, those who are there now, and who shall be there hereafter, to keep and cause to be kept with great diligence and respect our present edict, as soon as they shall have cognizance thereof; and that each, in his district, shall cause it to be published correctly, solemnly, and with sound of trumpet in all the usual places, so that no one may plead ignorance of it; and that the devotion of the immaculate conception of the most blessed Virgin, which Christians have long cherished in their hearts, may more and more increase; and that those people of an opposite opinion may no more in future be heard to open their mouths. In testimony of which we command these presents to be expedited, authorized by our seal, which is attached to them. —Given at Valentia, on the 2nd of February, the day on which we celebrate the Feast of the Purification of this most holy Virgin, in the year of Our Lord 1394, and the eighth of our reign."

for the zeal of the people subject to the dominion of Spain; in 1618 the Viceroy of Naples, his court and army, made a vow, in the Church of Our Lady the Great, to believe and defend the immaculate conception of the Virgin. A memorial column, surmounted by a magnificent statue of Our Lady, with the symbolical signs of her victory over original sin, was erected in testimony of this public engagement thus chivalrously contracted.

The Spanish nation, which has always particularly signalized itself in this devotion, has so thoroughly adopted it, that not a single preacher mounts the pulpit without prefacing his sermon with a profession of faith in the conception without stain,[1] and that it has been introduced even into the familiar forms of speech pronounced when people meet.[2]

Finally, in 1771, while the destructive blast of philosophy violently shook the belief of Christians in France and several other countries of Europe, the King of Spain, Charles III., instituted an order in honour of the Virgin conceived without sin, and solemnly declared her, with the concurrence of the Cortes, and a brief from the Holy See, "Universal Patrona de Espana è Indias."[3]

In France, in spite of the licentiousness and infidelity which the flood of revolutions left behind it as it subsided, this belief gains ground, and penetrates even to the most secluded hamlets. The diocess of Paris is especially distinguished for its zeal in embracing this pious belief, which flourishes beneath the protecting shade of its archbishops,[4] and which is confirmed by the

(1) "Alabado sea el santisimo Sacramento del altar, y la inmaculada concepcion de la Virgen Maria, concebida sin pecado original en el primer instante de su ser natural."

(2) In going into a Spanish house, the first words which visitors pronounce, before they wish "Good day," are these, "Ave Maria purisima;" the masters of the house immediately answer, "Sin pecado concebida, santisima."

(3) "Por la devocion que desde nuestra infancia hemos tenido á Maria santisima en su misterio de la inmaculada concepcion, deseamos poner bajo los divinos auspicios de esta celestial protectora la. . . . Nueva Orden, y mandamos que sea reconocida en ella por patrona. . . ."—(Leg. 12, t. iii. lib. vi., Noviss. Rec.)

(4) "C'est un fait que nous sommes jaloux de constater, et nous desirons que

supernatural things related of the miraculous medal struck in honour of the mystery of the immaculate conception.

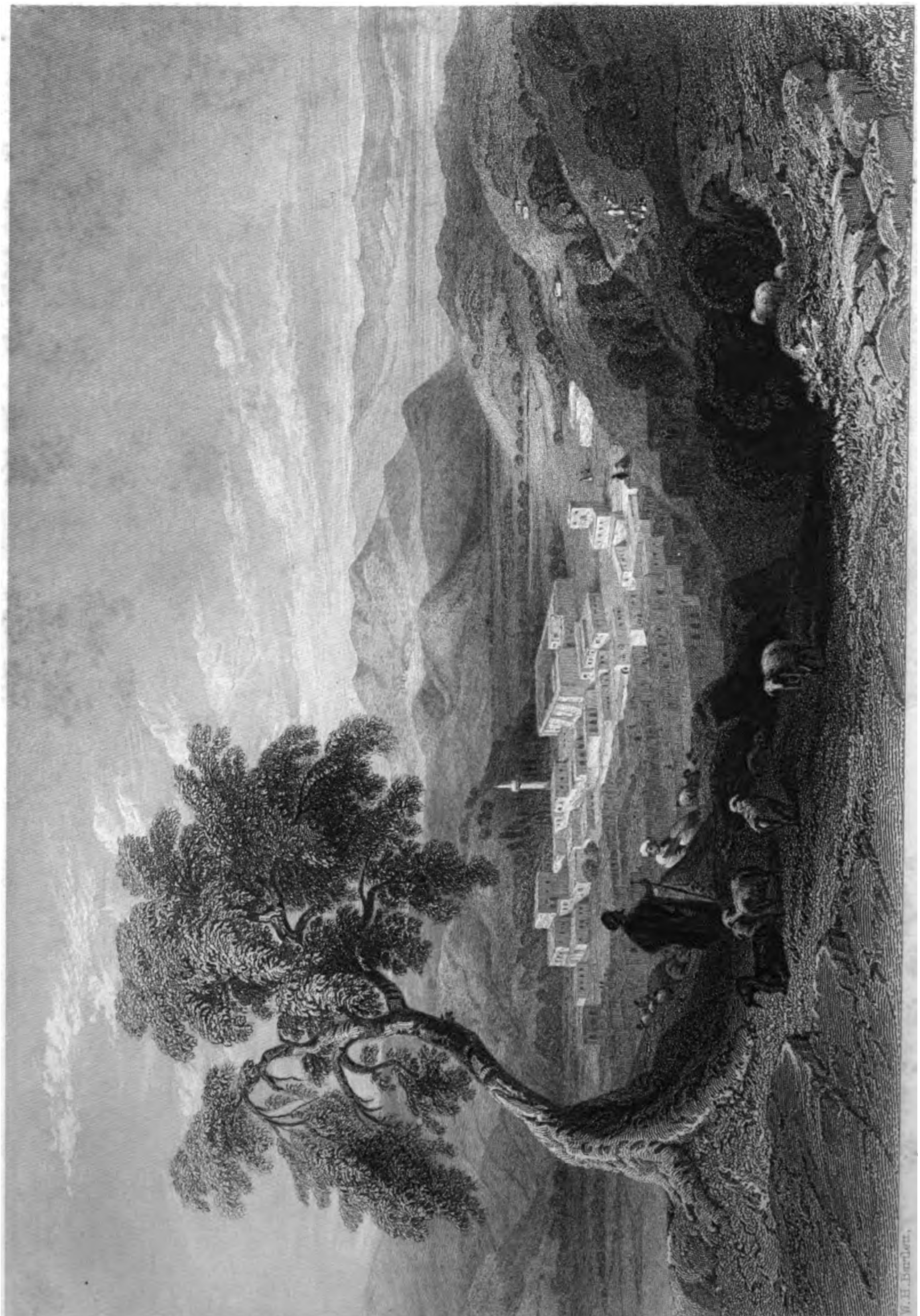
If the tradition of the apostles, the favourable disposition of the Church, the authority of councils, the adherence of universities and religious orders, the assent of kings and nations, the dedication of temples and altars, the foundation of offices, the institution of confraternities and of royal orders, may be taken into account in a controversy which has astonished the very pagans,[1] the cause of the immaculate conception of Mary, so long before the tribunal of Catholic opinion, appears to us to be won; and we do not believe that it would be rash to suppose that God, preserving his divine Mother from the original stain, may have said to her, as Assuerus said to Esther, "This law is not made for thee, but for all others."

Addition by the Translator.

[The foregoing chapter was written by the author before the ever memorable 8th of December, 1854, when it was solemnly defined by the infallible authority of the Catholic Church, that "it is A DOGMA OF FAITH that the most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instant of her conception, by a singular privilege and grace of God, in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the human race, was preserved exempt from all stain of original sin."]

la connaissance en parvienne jusqu'aux lieux les plus reculés du monde Catholique: dans notre diocèse cette dévotion a jeté avec le temps des racines de plus en plus profondes, et les malheurs sont encore venus l'affermir, l'accroître, et l'étendre avec un merveilleux progrès."—(See the Mandement of the Archbishop of Paris, on occasion of the consecration of the Church of Notre Dame de Lorette.)

(1) "What then!" exclaimed Julian the Pelagian, addressing himself to a bishop who maintained the universality of original sin, "what then! do you subject the birth of Mary to the empire of the devil?"—(St. Aug., lib. iv. Op. imperf.)


W. H. Bartlett,

CHAPTER III.

BIRTH OF MARY.

TOWARDS the decline of the religion and affairs of the Hebrews, at the time marked out by the prophets, and when the regal sceptre was in the hands of a stranger, according to the grand prediction of Jacob, there was at Nazareth, a town of lower Galilee, not far distant from Mount Carmel, a just man, named Joachim,[1] of the tribe of Juda, and of the race of David[2] through Nathan; his wife—who, according to the opinion of St. Augustin, was of the priestly tribe[3]—was called Ann, a name which signifies in Hebrew *gracious*.[4]

They were both just before Jehovah, and walked in his commandments with a perfect heart;[5] but the Lord seemed to have turned away from them the light of his countenance, for

(1) One of Mary's historians, Christopher de Castro, has found—after the Rabbins, St. Hilary, and other fathers of the Church—that the father of Mary had two names, Heli and Joachim. The Arabs and Mussulmans know him by that of Amram, son of Matheus, and distinguish him from another Amram, father of Mary, the sister of Moses.—(D'Herbelot, Bibliothèque Orientale, t. ii.)

(2) According to the Proto-gospel of St. James and the Gospel of the Nativity of Mary, Joachim was of the race of David. Justin, who flourished only fifty years after the death of St. John the apostle, who was born in Palestine, and who had been able to collect the traditions yet recent, says, in like manner, that Mary descended in a right line from King David.

(3) St. August., De consensu Evangel.

(4) The Mahometans, inheritors of the Arab traditions, knew the blessed mother of the Holy Virgin under her proper name, which is Hannah; she was, according to them, the daughter of Nakhor, and the wife of Amram.—(D'Herbelot, Bibliothèque Orientale, t. ii.)

(5) St. Ann and St. Joachim were publicly honoured in the Church in the early ages. St. John Damascen highly eulogises their virtues. The Emperor Justinian I. had a church built at Constantinople under the invocation of St. Ann, about the year 550. The body of the saint was brought, it is said, from Palestine to Constantinople in 710.—(See Godescard, t. v. p. 319.) Luther was very devout to St. Ann before his heresy; it was to that saint that he promised to embrace the monastic state, before the corpse of one of his comrades, who was just killed by lightning before his eyes.

one great blessing was wanting to their life: they were without children, which made them sad, because in Israel sterility was a reproach.

Joachim, who loved his wife for her wonderful meekness and eminent virtues, would not add to her misfortune by giving her a bill of divorce, which the law at that time granted so easily;[1] he kept her in his house, and this pious couple, humbly resigned to the divine decrees, passed their days in labour, prayer, and almsdeeds.

So many virtues could not fail of their reward: after twenty years of barrenness, Ann conceived, as it were by miracle, and brought forth that blessed creature who was more perfect, more holy, and more pleasing in the eyes of the Lord than all the elect put together.

It was about the beginning of the month of *Tisri*,[2] which is the first of the civil year of the Jews, while the smoke of holocausts ascended to heaven for the expiation of the sins of the people, that the predestined Virgin was born who was to repair the primeval transgression.[3] Her birth was silent and unknown, like that of her divine Son; her parents were of the people, although descended from a long succession of kings, and led, to all appearances, an obscure life: this mystical Rose, which St. John saw later on clothed with the sun as with radiant

(1) It was the Pharisees who had introduced this abuse of divorce, so strongly condemned by our Lord (St. Matt. xix. 8); they taught that a wife might be put away for the most trifling causes; for example, for having over-dressed the meat for her *master of the household*, or merely for not being handsome enough. This was the opinion of Hillel and Akiba.—(Basn., liv. vii. c. 22.)

(2) The 8th of September, according to the teaching of the Church.—Baronius makes Mary born in the year of Rome 733, twenty-one years before the common era, on the 8th of September, on a Saturday, at daybreak. Le Nain de Tillemont says that the Virgin was born in the year 734: this opinion is most followed.

(3) This is what the Turks relate of the birth of the Blessed Virgin:—The wife of Amram (Joachim) said to God, "O Lord, I have consecrated to thee by vow the fruit of my womb; receive it with goodness, O thou who knowest and understandest all things." When she had brought forth, she added, "O Lord, I have brought a daughter into the world; I have named her Miriam (Mary), I place her under thy protection, her and her posterity, that thou mayest preserve them from the artifices of Satan."—(The Koran, ch. 3.)

garments, was to expand to the burning wind of adversity, upon a stem poor and despoiled.[1]

The cradle of the Queen of angels was neither ornamented with gold, nor covered with Egyptian counterpanes richly embroidered, nor perfumed with spikenard, myrrh, and aloes, like those of the Hebrew princes; it was composed of flexible twigs, and swathing bands of coarse linen compressed the little arms which were one day so tenderly to nurse the Saviour of the world. The children of kings, while still wrapped up in their swaddling clothes of purple, see the great men of the state bow their heads before them, and say to them, My lord! The woman who was the Spouse and the Mother of God, gave her first smile to some poor women among the people, who perhaps said sorrowfully to each other, as they thought of the unfortunate and despised condition to which men had condemned them, Here is one slave more!

In Israel, they gave the child on the ninth day after its birth, in the midst of the assembled family, the name which it was to bear among men: the daughter of Joachim received from her father the name of Miriam (Mary), which is translated from the Syriac by *lady, sovereign mistress*, and which signifies in Hebrew, *star of the sea.*

"And, surely," says St. Bernard, "the Mother of God could not have a name more appropriate, nor one more expressive of her high dignity. Mary is, in fact, that beautiful and brilliant star which shines upon the vast and stormy sea of the world."

This divine name conceals within itself a powerful charm, and one of such marvellous sweetness, that we have but to pronounce it, and the heart is moved; only to write it, and the style is adorned. "The name of Mary," says St. Anthony of

(1) Isaias had foretold it: saying, "There shall come forth a rod out of the trunk of Jesse;" for this word trunk, in the Hebrew expression, as St. Jerom observes (on Is. c. ii.), signifies a trunk without branches and without leaves, to denote, continues this holy doctor, that the august Mary was to be born of the race of David, when that family should have lost its splendour, and should have fallen away from it entirely.

Padua, " is sweeter to the lips than a honeycomb, more flattering to the ear than a sweet song, more delicious to the heart than the purest joy."[1]

Eighty days after the birth of a daughter, the Jewish woman was solemnly purified at the temple where she brought her first-born child. In conformity with the law of Moses, she then offered to the Lord a lamb, or two turtle-doves; the two turtle-doves were the sacred offering of the poor: they were that of the spouse of Joachim.

But the gratitude of the pious mother went beyond the customary sacrifice: the worthy rival of Anna, the wife of Elcana, she offered to the Lord a victim more pure, a dove more innocent than those which had just fallen gasping and bleeding under the knife of the sacrificing priest: she had no votive crown of most pure gold to hang up on the partition wall of the temple:[2] she laid at the feet of the Most High the crown of her old age—the infant with which He had blessed her life; and she solemnly engaged to bring her daughter again to the temple, and consecrate her there to the service of the holy place, as soon as her young reason should be able to distinguish good and evil. The father of Mary ratified this vow, which then became of obligation.[3]

When the ceremony was finished, the couple returned to their native province,—that province barren of great men, from which Israel was far from expecting a prophet,[4]—and re-entered their

(1) "Nomen Virginis Mariæ. mel in ore, melos in aure, jubilum in corde," says poetically St. Anthony of Padua.

(2) Macch. lib. iv.

(3) There were two sorts of vows among the Jews: the first, *neder*, was a simple vow, after which what had been vowed to the Lord might be redeemed (such was that of Ann, the mother of Mary); the second, *cherem*, was a vow of indispensable obligation, by which all right to the thing promised was given up absolutely and irrevocably. Every Israelite might thus vow what belonged to him,—houses, lands, beasts, children, slaves, &c.,—and the things devoted could neither be sold nor redeemed, at any price whatever.

(4) "Can any good come out of Nazareth?" asked Nathanael of those who spoke to him of Christ. "Because this place was small and contemptible," says St. John Chrysostom, "and not only this place, but the whole of Galilee."—(Serm. ix. in St. Matt.)

humble dwelling, ever open to the needy and the stranger. There it was that the child of benediction became, from her early years, the delight of her family, and rose up like one of those lilies of which Jesus proclaims the beauty, and which, as St. Bernard poetically says, have the odour of hope—*habens odorem spei.* According to the custom of the women of her nation, Ann would feed her daughter at her own breast.[1]

Mary's reason, like the daylight of the favoured regions of the sun, had scarcely any twilight, and shone forth from the most tender age. Her precocious fervour, the wisdom of her discourse, at a period of life when other children enjoy as yet but a mere physical existence, led her parents to judge that the hour of separation was come; and when Joachim had offered to the Lord, for the third time from the birth of his daughter, the first-fruits of the harvest, and produce of the small inheritance of his fathers, the pair, grateful and resigned, took the road to Jerusalem, to deposit, in the sacred enclosure of the temple, the treasure which the Holy One of Israel had given them.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PRESENTATION.

The Cison proudly rolled its red waters, swelled by the equinoctial storms,[2] and the great mountains of Galilee began to be covered with snow, when the parents of Mary began their

(1) In Judea, women did not often give up suckling their children; we reckon but three nurses in the whole Scripture—the nurses of Rebecca, Miphiboseth, and Joas; it must be observed, moreover, that Rebecca was a stranger, and that the others were princes.

(2) The Cison is a small river, which runs between Nazareth and Mount Carmel; insignificant and impoverished during the summer, like all the streams of water of Palestine, it becomes considerable during the rainy season. The troops of Sisara, the general of the army of Jabin, were drowned in this overflowed river in the attempt to force a passage.

journey to Jerusalem. We are ignorant of the motive which induced them to leave their native province during the rainy season. Perhaps it was the desire to assist at the great solemnities of the Dedication; perhaps they merely regulated their departure by the epoch of the service of Zachary, whose priestly functions called him to the temple only at regular times.[1]

Obliged to make a journey of several days, during the inclement season, with a child quite young, the prudent and pious travellers did not make their way towards the holy city by the wild and rocky road which winds across the arid flats, the foaming torrents, and the deep ravines of the mountains of Samaria: there winter ruled with all his frosts. They descended, by the shrubby slopes of Carmel, into the charming and fertile plains which stretch out between the mountains of Palestine and the coasts of Syria, a land happy and forward, the temperature of which is so mild that the orange-trees blossom there in the heart of winter, and the flowers of May expand in the month of December.[2] After leaving behind them the rich pastures where formerly rose the tents of Issachar, a tribe of shepherd astronomers,[3] whom the burning breath of the Lord's anger had dis-

(1) According to the order established by David, the priests were divided into twenty four-classes, or turns, each of which served its week. Each class was subdivided into seven parts, which had each their week in turn to officiate; each part of this subdivision had that portion of the service which was assigned to him by lot.—(1 Paralip. c. xxiv.) Zachary was of the turn or service of Abia. —(Prid., Hist. of the Jews.)

(2) Volney saw orange-trees bearing fruit and flowers in the open air, in the month of January, on the coasts of Syria. "With us," he says, "nature has divided the seasons by months; there, one may say that they are separated only by hours. If we are annoyed at Tripoli by the heats of July, six hours' march transports us upon the neighbouring mountains to the temperature of March. On the other hand, are we incommoded with the frost of December, in the midst of the mountains, one day's march brings us back to the shore among the flowers of May."

(3) St. Jerom assures us that the children of Issachar were the learned men who calculated times, and set down the feasts.—(Hieron., Quæst. in 1 Paralip. 112, p. 1390, et in Genes. 49.) This tradition is conformable to that of the rabbins, who affirm that those of the tribe of Issachar applied themselves assiduously to

persed, like a handful of light straw, even to the wild and mountainous regions of Media;—after having admired, as they passed, the hills covered with palm, banana, and pomegranate-trees, which once formed the smiling inheritance of the sons of Joseph—a fine and warlike race, famous for their skill in shooting with the bow;—the travellers from Galilee went along by the side of the narrow stream of the Gaas, the willows of which love the bank; passed through the groves of Ramatha, a beautiful town, like a cameo fallen into a basket of roses, and reached at length the borders of the ancient territory of the Jebusites. There the aspect of everything was changed: no more flowers, no more verdure, no more odoriferous breeze wafting afar the sweet scent of the lemon-tree; barren rocks, deep ravines where the wind forced its way with lugubrious moanings; abrupt and bare mountains, resounding with the hoarse cries of the eagle: in a word, the grandest, most melancholy, most desolate, and most sterile land that could be seen.

The little caravan had followed, for some time, a stony path tracked along the flat of an arid mountain, when Joachim, stopping on a sudden at an abrupt turn, stretched out his arms towards the south with a movement of religious enthusiasm mixed with national pride. The object which he thus pointed out to the notice of his companions was worth remarking, for nothing more magnificent or more extraordinary existed at that time in Asia. It was a city of thirty-three stadia in circumference, enclosed in stone, like a ruby of Beloutchistan; a town of marble, cedar, and gold, its splendour having something in it sad, wild, and suspicious, which denoted an uneasy authority, permanent fears of some foreign power, and a state of things full of contrasts. There were seen in it enormous towers, magnificent as palaces, and palaces fortified like citadels. Its temple, glittering with gold, which shone brilliantly upon the narrow flat surface of the

this knowledge of astronomy.—(Maimon., in Kiddosch. hachodesh, et Zachuth, in Juchasin.) In fine, the Scripture authorizes this tradition, since it relates that the children of Issachar were expert in the science of the times, so as to order what Israel should do.—(1 Paralip. xii. 32.)

highest of its mountains, like the orb of the full moon when it skirts the snowy summits of Libanus,[1] was a fortress almost impregnable, which kept the *holy people of the Lord* in awe; while the tower Antonia, from the top of its four elegant turrets of polished marble, kept an overshadowing and continued watch over the court of the temple. A triple enclosure of walls of enormous stones,[2] in which were encrusted ninety forts, bound the sides of this city, which was surrounded by dark valleys of dizzying depths and rocks inaccessible. This proud and warlike city, which seemed to have been transported by magic from the fabulous regions of Ginnistan,[3] beneath the cloudless sky of Palestine; this paradise of the Jews (*Ghangh-dix-houcht*), so poetically regretted on the banks of the Euphrates; the city of David and of the Machabees; this Jerusalem, which, in its abject slavery, all the East still salutes with the antique name which the father of Mary then gave it—*el Cods!* (the Holy.)

The parents of the Virgin entered the capital of Judea by the gate of Rama, upon which fell the shadow of a tower,[4] so high that from its flat top were seen Mount Carmel, the Great Sea, and the Mountains of Arabia. The green standard of Judas Macchabeus was still flying there with its religious device; but the soldiers who surrounded it no longer understood it; for they

(1) The exterior front of the temple was entirely covered with plates of gold, so thick that as soon as daylight appeared, it was as dazzling as the rays of the rising sun. As for the other sides, where there was no gold, the stones of them were so white, that this superb mass of building looked at a distance like a mountain covered with snow.—(Josephus, de Bello, lib. v. c. 13.)

(2) "Extrema rupis abrupta; et turres, ubi mons juvisset, in sexaginta pedes, inter devexa, in centenos vicenosque attollebantur; mira specie, ac procul intuentibus pares."—(Tacit. Hist. lib. v.)

(3) Ginnistan, which the marvellous traditions of the Assyrians and Arabs place at the foot of Mount Caucasus, and on the borders of the Caspian Sea, was the abode of the Peris—a beautiful and fabulous race, which much resembles that of our fairies. These powerful beings, born before the deluge, disposed of the elements, and created everything that could afford them pleasure. Their capital city, which they had carefully fortified, to defend it from the attacks of the Dives, who were wicked and formidable genii, was of marble, gold, rubies, and diamonds.

(4) The tower Psephina.

were Thracians, Galatians, Germans, and the fair children of Gaul, whom Herod, who feared the Jews and depended upon foreigners, took into his pay, and who were detested at Jerusalem almost as much as himself.

The travellers next followed certain winding and gloomy streets, lined with heavy square houses, without windows, with terrace roofs, which stood in melancholy lines, like citadels; and they stopped in the eastern part of the city before a house of modest appearance, which tradition points out as the dwelling of St. Ann.[1]

After a purification of seven days, according to the custom of those who came to sacrifice in the temple,[2] Joachim provided himself with the lamb which he was to offer to the Lord, clothed himself in white,[3] collected together some of the relations and friends whom he had in Jerusalem, and ascended at the head of them to the temple *with as much ardour as he would have gone up to the assault of a place in battle.*[4]

This temple of the God of hosts, where the Virgin then presented herself, like the dove of the ark with the olive branch, had undergone numerous vicissitudes. One of the ancestors of Mary, the wise son of King David, had made it the wonder of the East. He had lavished about it the gold of Ophir, the perfumes of Saba, the cedar of Libanus, the brass which the fleets of Tyre —that queen of the seas, whose merchants were princes—had gone in quest of to barbarous regions, and silver, so common at

(1) A monastery has been erected over this house of St. Ann; this monastery has been turned into a mosque. Under the Christian kings it was inhabited by religious women.—(See Itin. de Paris à Jérusalem, t. ii. p. 211.)

(2) It was not merely necessary to be presented in the temple with the victim: the law required that the person should remain outside for seven full days, and be solemnly purified on the third and seventh day with ashes and hyssop: that done, they might sacrifice.—(Philo, Tract. de Sacrific., c. 3.)

(3) According to the rabbins, the sacrifice was of no avail when he who offered it was not clothed in white garments.—(Basn., liv. ix. c. 4.)

(4) This was of obligation; the Hebrews were to go up to the temple with as much ardour as *a soldier to an assault;* they found this pretext in the 55th Psalm, where David said that he went to the house of God as to a strong city.—(See Basn., Hist. des Juifs, liv. vii. c. 17.)

that time that it had become of little value; but this splendour had passed away like a vision of the night, thanks to the burning avarice of the people of Egypt and Chaldea. Despoiled twenty times over, but always re-established with magnificence, it had risen again from its ruins under Zorobabel, who had rebuilt it, sword in hand, in spite of the efforts of a multitude of jealous nations. Nevertheless, the second temple, notwithstanding its unheard-of richness, was every way inferior to the other in grandeur as well as in holiness. It was in vain that the Jews poured out there with a liberal hand *the strength of the corn and the blood of the vine;* that streams of gold arriving from all points of the horizon, came to feed incessantly its sacred treasury; that pagan kings, confessing the awful sanctity of the God of Israel, sent thither the most magnificent offerings.[1] Nothing of all this could supply for the absence of the ark, with which had disappeared the tables of the law—that is to say, the will of God written by himself by the glare of the lightning on Mount Sinai; the rod of the almond-tree which had miraculously blossomed—the most ancient title of the sons of Aaron to the office of high priesthood; and the manna of the desert, which by the miracle of its long preservation, confirmed so many ancient prodigies wrought for the deliverance of Israel. These precious things were lost, as well as the sacred fire, which the breezes of the holy mountain alone could enkindle on the brazen grate of the altar of holocausts; and the oil of unction, composed by Moses, whence the priests and kings derived their noble title of the anointed of the Lord. What was still more to be regretted, was that the *Schekina*, that white cloud which attested the divine presence, had never shown itself in the second temple, and that

(1) In Josephus may be seen the detailed description of the magnificent table of massive gold incrusted with precious stones, and the no less splendid vessels which Ptolemy Philadelphus gave to the temple; almost all the princes of Asia had enriched it with their gifts, and about the time of the Presentation of the Virgin, the Empress Livia sent thither, in her own name and in the name of Augustus, magnificent vessels of gold.—(Josephus, de Bello, lib. ii. c. 17; Philo, ad Cajum.)

even the stones of the *rational*, that last and brilliant oracle of the God of hosts, had lost their prophetic lustre.[1] This is what filled the heart of the sons of Aaron with bitterness, when they compared the house of Zorobabel with the temple of the son of David; this made the doctors of the law say that the fulfilment of the celebrated prophecy of Aggeus was hopeless, unless the Messias himself should appear bodily in the second temple.

After passing that magnificent gate of Corinthian brass, which twenty Levites could hardly close at night, and which opened of itself four years before the destruction of Jerusalem, to the great consternation of the deicidal people whom this gloomy presage filled with terror,[2] Mary and her parents found themselves in a vast enclosure paved with black and white stones, and surrounded by tall porticoes, which in time of war served as ramparts.[3] A crowd of strangers and people of the nation, whose brilliant costumes of opposite colours reminded one of an immense parterre of tulips, were walking and conversing in this forum of Jerusalem, which was not reputed sacred, and which was called the Court of the Gentiles, because idolaters could not advance farther under pain of death.[4]

At some distance from the crowd, under the porch of Solomon, the haughty aristocracy of Israel, clothed in purple and scarlet, or wearing those long Babylonian robes embroidered with flowers of gold, were waiting for the hour of prayer, keeping aloof from the foreigners with a haughty reserve, considerably mingled with contempt. Joachim, who was equal to the princes of his nation in nobility of race, although he had not their wealth, directed his steps that way, sure of being well received; for those Jews, so

(1) God employed the precious stones which the high priest wore upon the *rational* to foretell victory; for, before the army took the field, there shone forth from them so bright a light, that the people knew thereby that his sovereign Majesty was present, and ready to assist them; but when I began to write this, the *rational* had ceased to give this light for two hundred years.—(Fl. Joseph., Ant. Jud., lib. iii. c. 8.)

(2) Joseph., de Bello, lib. vi.

(3) Tacit., Historiarum, lib. v.

(4) Joseph., de Bello, lib. v. et vi.

disdainful towards the Gentiles,[1] loved each other as brethren, especially when they belonged to the same lineage. Scarcely had they perceived them, when a number of illustrious ladies, warriors, and great lords of the family of David advanced to meet them, and after the customary salutations, they joined the family from Galilee, as if to form an honourable train of attendants for Mary.[2] The fathers, who relate this circumstance, have piously believed that these great personages, the flower of the Jewish nobility, were not found there by mere chance, but that God, who would provide a triumphal entry into his temple for the future Mother of the Messias, had divinely inspired them with the resolution to come thither.

From the midst of the Court of the Gentiles arose two other enclosures—both sacred—which composed the temple. Seen from below, this majestic and splendid edifice presented a quadrangular mass of building, the walls of which, white as alabaster, were pierced with ten superb gates, covered with thick plates of silver and gold. As the temple, properly so called, crowned the summit of Mount Moria,—a site appropriate for the habitation of the *God of the hills*,—the ground was a continued ascent, and the walls were completely surrounded by marble steps, which somewhat diminished their height.

After ascending the steps of the temple, the group already purified, in the midst of whom was that blessed child who was to be consecrated to God, stopped for a moment on the small platform of Chel.[3] There the Pharisees displayed their *tephilim*,[4] and

(1) Basnage remarks that at the time of Jesus Christ the Jews regarded the Gentiles as dogs, and hated them mortally. "If the idolaters drown themselves, the doctors taught, they must not be pulled out of the water, nor succoured; the only favour that can be done them is not to plunge them deeper into the water, down the precipice, or in the well, if they have fallen in."—(Basn., liv. v. c. 25.)

(2) "Primarios quoque Hierosolymitas viros et mulieres interfuisse huic deductioni, succinentibus universis angelis."—(Isid. de Thess.)

(3) The *Chel* was a space of ten cubits between the Court of the Gentiles and that of the women.

(4) The *tephilim* were small pieces of parchment on which were written, with ink made on purpose, four sentences of Scripture; the Jews wore them at the bend of the left arm, and in the middle of the forehead. These *tephilim*, or *phylacteries*, were much in use at the time of Jesus Christ, for they made of them

wound round their foreheads, bowed down,[1] a lappet of their *taled* of white and fine wool,[2] ornamented with purple pomegranates and little cords of the colour of the hyacinth. The brave captains of Herod half concealed their shining cuirasses beneath their long mantles, and the daughters of Sion enveloped themselves more closely in the folds of their veils of purple, sky-blue, or Syrian gauze, with flowers of gold, out of respect for the holy angels who had the charge of guarding the sanctuary.[3] This done, they entered the temple by the oriental gate, the most beautiful of all,—that one which poured streams of liquid gold when the Romans, unable to force it by the aid of iron, opened it by means of fire.[4]

In our cold northern regions, vast edifices are requisite to protect us from the injuries of the weather; thus we have immense cathedrals, capable of containing whole populations; but in ancient Asia the temples were almost exclusively for the use of the priests: the people used to pray outside. In Israel the *engdah*, or sacred assembly, was usually held in the court of the women: the second division was so called because the Jewish women, whom the severity of the old law made like to slaves, could not advance farther. Separated from their children and their husbands, who remained in the area of the court, or under the arcades of the peristyle during the ceremonies of religion, they prayed separately in upper galleries, with their heads humbly bent towards the house of Jehovah, of which they could see at

marks of distinction, which drew upon them his reproaches.—(Basnage, Hist. Juifs, liv. vii. c. 17.)

(1) The Pharisees walked always with their heads down, to affect a more humble countenance; and sometimes even with their eyes shut, to avoid seeing what might prove a temptation: thus it very often happened that in passing through the streets they ran their heads against the walls.—(Basn., liv. iii. c. 3.)

(2) *Taled*, a sort of square cloak which the Jews wore in the temple to make their prayer; some wound it round their necks, others covered their heads with it; this latter custom was the most general.—(Basn., t. v. liv. vii. c. 17.)

(3) Ideo debet mulier potestatem habere supra caput propter angelos.—(1 Ep. S. Pauli ad Corinth. ch. xi. v. 10.)

(4) Josephus relates, that when Titus ordered fire to be set to the gates of the second enclosure of the temple, the gold and silver ran down from them like water from a fountain.—(De Bello, c. 23.)

some distance the magnificent roof of cedar, bristling all over with pinnacles of gold.[1]

The ceremony of the Presentation certainly took place in the court of the women, and not in the actual interior of the sanctuary, where some authors have located it. It began by a sacrifice. The gate of Nicanor, silently rolling on its brazen hinges to let the victim pass in, showed a perspective view of the farthest space, quite like a marvellous vision of that Eden so much regretted, whose golden palaces, overshadowed by lofty cedars, were the habitations of the Just, as the Pharisees taught.[2] Through the marble columns of a superb portico, from the top of which hung down the gigantic branches and pendant clusters of a golden vine, was discovered an edifice which seemed at first sight to be of massive gold, so strong was the glare which was cast by so many dazzling plates covering its *façade* of a hundred cubits beneath the pure and powerful light of the sun of Asia. An incredible number of votive offerings, where ears of wheat, lilies, pomegranates, vine-leaves formed of emeralds, topazes, carbuncles, and rubies, according to their colours, were intermingled, were fastened to the temple by golden cords; and when the rushing wind of the mountains began to blow, they might have been taken for real flowers, such was their exquisite workmanship and perfect imitation. At different distances were seen banners shot through with arrows, and stained with idolatrous blood, which the Asmonean princes, heroes of imperishable memory, had won from the Greeks of Syria in the glorious wars of independence, and consecrated with their priestly and warrior hands to the God of hosts. Herod, a cruel prince, but a valiant captain, had added to them

(1) This precaution had been taken in order to prevent the pigeons and doves, which were very numerous at Jerusalem, from resting in their flight on the roof of the temple, and defiling it.

(2) The Jews believed that the souls of the saints go into the garden of Eden, the entrance of which is forbidden to the living by the angel of death. They are magnificent in the description of this locality, where they place palaces built of precious stones, and rivers of perfumed waters. In hell, on the contrary, a river of fire falls upon the damned, who suffer the extremes of heat and cold.—(Maimonides, Menasses, &c.)

the standards lately taken in his fortunate expeditions against the Arabs; and the sight of these trophies of arms filled with patriotic pride and warlike ardour those Hebrew hearts who cared so little for death, when they had to fight for what was dearer to them than gold, their families, or their life—the temple!

The priests and Levites assembled in the last compartment received from the hands of Joachim the victim of *prosperity*.[1] These ministers of the living God had not their foreheads bound with laurel or green smallage, like the priests of the idols; a kind of mitre of a round shape, of very thick linen cloth, a linen tunic, long, white, and without folds, fastened with a broad girdle, embroidered with hyacinth and purple, composed the priestly costume, which was worn only in the temple. One of the priests took the lamb, and after a short invocation of the God of Jacob, slew it, turning its head towards the north; the blood, which flowed into a brazen vessel, was poured out here and there around the altar. When these first rites were terminated, the priests laid out upon a golden plate a portion of the flesh of the victim, still quivering, and part of the entrails, which the Levites had carefully washed in the fountain-court; he wrapped up the oblation in a double covering of fat, covered it with incense, threw upon it the salt of the covenant, then, ascending barefooted the gentle rise which led up to the platform of the brazen altar, he there deposited the offering upon the billets of wood, perfectly sound and stripped of their bark, which fed the sacred fire. The rest of the victim, except the breast and the right shoulder, which belonged to the priests, was returned to the husband of St. Ann, that he might make a feast with it for his friends and relatives, according to the custom.[2]

(1) Whether a favour was asked of God, or he was thanked for one obtained, it was called "a sacrifice of prosperity."

(2) This feast, reputed sacred, might be kept for two days together; but the law expressly forbad anything to be reserved from it for the third day, and it must be given even to the last morsel to the poor, for two reasons, says Philo: the first, because, as the victim belonged to God, who is in his nature liberal, it was his will that the needy should partake of it; the second to hinder avarice,

The last sounds of the trumpets of the priests were dying away along the porticoes, and the sacrifice was still burning on the brazen altar, when a priest came down into the court of the women to conclude the ceremonial. Ann, followed by Joachim, carrying Mary in her arms, came forward with a veil over her head, towards the minister of the Most High, and if we may believe an Arab tradition which Mahomet himself has recorded in the Koran, she presented to him the young handmaid of the Lord, saying with a voice full of emotion, "I come to offer you the present which God has made me."[1]

The priest accepted, in the name of God, who makes the womb of mothers fruitful, the precious deposit which gratitude confided to him, and blessed Joachim, as well as his pious company;[2] then stretching out his hands over the assembly, which bowed down over the pontifical benediction,[3] "O Israel," said he, "may the Lord direct his light towards thee—may he make thee to prosper in everything, and grant thee peace!" A canticle of thanksgiving, harmoniously accompanied by the harps of the priests, terminated the Presentation of the Virgin.

Such was the ceremony which took place, in the latter days of November, in the holy temple of Sion. Men, who usually stop

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which is a vice of slaves, from creeping in, and dishonouring a holy practice.—(Philo, Tract. de Sacrif. c. 2.)

(1) According to a Mahometan tradition, when St. Ann had given birth to the blessed Virgin, she presented her to the priests, saying these words, which are also found in the Koran: "Dhouncon hadih alnedhirat," that is, "Behold the offering which I make you." Hossein Vaëz adds to these words in his Persian paraphrase, "Kih es an Khodii," which means, "For it is a present which God has made me," or, still more literally, "For it is from this present that God is to come."—(D'Herbelot, Bibl. Orient. t. ii. p. 620.)

(2) Heli blessed Elcana and his wife, and he said to Elcana, "The Lord give thee seed of this woman, for the loan thou hast lent to the Lord. And they went to their own home."—(1 Kings i. 20.) See F. Croiset upon this ceremony.—(Exercises de Pieté, t. xviii. p. 48.)

(3) While the pontiff gave the blessing, the people were obliged to place their hands over their eyes and hide their faces, because it was not lawful to behold the hands of the priest: the Jews imagined that God was behind the pontiff, and looked upon them through his outstretched hands; they did not dare to lift up their eyes to him, "for no one can see God and live."—(Basn., liv. vii. c. 15.)

at the surface, beheld nothing but a young child, very beautiful and wonderfully fervent, consecrated by her mother to that God who had granted her to her prayers and tears; but the angels of heaven, who hovered over the sanctuary, discovered in that weak and gentle creature the Virgin of Isaias, the spouse of whom Solomon had sung the mystical espousals, the celestial Eve who came to impart to a fallen race the hope of a glorious immortality. Penetrated with joy to see at length the aurora shine forth of the day of the Messias, "they united," say certain ancient authors,[1] "with this feast of earth, and covering the young descendant of David with their white wings, they scattered under her feet the odoriferous flowers of Paradise, and celebrated her entry into the temple with melodious concerts."

What passed then in the soul of Mary, in that soul sweetly expanded to the breath of the sanctifying Spirit, where all was peace, pure love, and light? By what sacred ties did she unite herself to HIM, who had preferred her to the virgins and queens of so many nations? This is a secret between herself and God; but we may reasonably believe that never was oblation more favourably received; and St. Evodius of Antioch, St. Epiphanius of Salamis, St. Andrew of Crete, and a multitude of Latin fathers, agree in considering the consecration of the Virgin as the most pleasing act of religion in the sight of God which man had hitherto performed.

The name of the priest who received the Blessed Virgin among the number of daughters of the Lord is not known; St. Germanus, patriarch of Constantinople, and George of Nicomedia, incline to the belief that it was the father of St. John the Baptist: the ties of relationship which connected Zachary with the family of Joachim, the high rank which he then occupied in the priesthood,[2] and the tender affection which Mary cherished for him and for Elizabeth, impart to this supposition a high degree of probability.

(1) St. Andrew of Crete, and St. George of Nicomedia.

(2) The Jews believed that St. John Baptist was much greater than Jesus Christ, because he was the son of a *high priest*.—(St. J. Chrysost., Serm. 12, in Matt.)

Be this as it may, the blessed daughter of Joachim was solemnly admitted into the number of the *almas*, or young virgins, who were brought up under the sacred shadow of the altar.

That Mary spent her best years in the temple is proved by apostolic tradition, by the writings of the fathers, and the opinion of the church, who is not used to sanction doubtful facts;[1] nevertheless, certain heretics have allowed themselves to treat this circumstance as fabulous, and some Catholic authors themselves have considered it an obscure point, concealed beneath the veil of olden times, which it was very difficult to clear up. The denials of the former surprise us but little, but the circumspection of the others is strange indeed; for if ever a Christian tradition possessed a character of authenticity it is this. St. Evodius, who was the first to relate, in an epistle entitled *Lumen*, which Nicephorus has preserved for us, this glorious circumstance of the infancy of the Virgin, flourished at the very time of the apostles and of the Mother of God. He was Bishop of Antioch, a town of Syria, to which both Jews and Christians resorted; and the temple where the newly-formed faithful followed, with profound veneration, the traces of the Son of God and his divine Mother, still subsisted in all its glory. This tradition, which came from the church of Jerusalem,—a church composed of the first disciples of Jesus Christ, among whom were found a number of relatives of the Virgin and of St. Joseph,—was consecrated very early by a religious memorial; a demonstrative proof in the eyes of Protestants themselves.[2] In fine, the greater number of

(1) In 1373, Philip de Maziere, a French nobleman, chancellor of the King of Cyprus, came to the court of Charles V., and related to him that in the East, where he had lived a long time, the Feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin was annually celebrated, in memory of her having been presented in the temple at the age of three years. Philip added, "I reflected that this great feast was not known in the Western church, and when I was ambassador from the King of Cyprus to the pope, I spoke to him about this festival, and presented him the office of it; he had it carefully examined by the cardinals, prelates, and doctors of theology, and permitted the feast to be celebrated." The Greeks kept it early under the title of the "Entrance of the Blessed Virgin into the Temple:" mention is made of it in their most ancient martyrologies.

(2) Gibbon himself could not help acknowledging the authenticity of the

the fathers,[1] and especially St. Jerom, who lived in the midst of the sites of our redemption, and where the traditions were yet recent, have recorded it, and held it to be true. This traditionary belief may therefore be ranked in the number of the best established facts of history.

CHAPTER V.

MARY IN THE TEMPLE.

In the fortified enclosure of the temple, on that site where the Christians erected an oratory, of which the companions in arms of Godfrey made a church with a gilded cupola, under the invocation of the Blessed Mary,[2] which the brave Knights Templars often took delight in ornamenting with spoils of the Saracens, arose that part of the religious edifice which had been conse-

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religious traditions in Palestine. "They (the Christians) fixed, by *unquestionable* tradition, the scene of each memorable event" (c. xxiii.): an avowal of considerable weight in the mouth of a writer so well informed as the English historian, and a man at the same time so little disposed in favour of religion. According to M. de Chateaubriand, if there is anything well proved upon earth, it is the authenticity of the Christian traditions at Jerusalem.

(1) St. Epiphanius, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Gregory of Nazianzum, St. Germanus, patriarch of Constantinople, George of Nicomedia, St. John Damascen, &c.

(2) The mosque of Omar (*el Aksa*) represents to the Christians the ancient temple of Solomon; *el Sakhra* (the rock) is built on the place where Mary lived from the age of three years till her espousals with Joseph. This place was at that time an appendage to the temple of Solomon, as *el Sakhra* is now to the mosque of Omar. Before the crusades, *el Sakhra* was only a chapel; the Franks added to it a church, which they surmounted with a gilt cupola. When the conquerors threw down the great cross which glittered on the cupola of the *Sakhra*, the cries of joy of the Mussulmans, and the cries of grief of the Christians, were so great, says an Arab author, that it seemed as if the world was going to be destroyed.—(Correspondance d'Orient, t. v.) According to Schonab, there arose a great tumult in the city, which Saladin was obliged to suppress in person.

crated to the virgins who were dedicated to the Lord: it was thither that Zachary led his young relative.[1]

Although virginity in Israel was only a temporary virtue, and had soon to give place to conjugal virtues, it was not without privileges and without honour. Jehovah loved the prayers of chaste children, of pure virgins; and it was a virgin, and not a queen, whom he had chosen to bring about the redemption of the human race. Thus, when the *seers* of Juda unfolded to the elect, but oft chastised people, the prophetic picture of their miseries, or their victories, they always introduced in it a virgin, either smiling or in tears, to personify provinces and cities. In the wars of extermination, in which the broadsword of the Hebrews cut down the women, children, and old men of Moab, the virgins were spared; and the high priest, who was forbidden by a severe law to pay funeral honours to the friend *whom he loved as his own soul*, and even to the prince of his people, might assist without being defiled at the funeral of his sister if she had died a virgin.[2]

The virgins, or *almas*, took part in the ceremonies of the Hebrew worship before that worship had a temple. We see them, under the guidance of Mary, the sister of Moses, celebrate with dances and canticles the passage of the Red Sea.[3] These dancing choirs of young women, transplanted from Egypt into the desert, continued a long time among the Hebrews. The virgins of Silo, who seem to have been, in the time of the Judges,

(1) St. Germanus affirms that it was Zachary who undertook to place the Virgin in the temple. The Arab traditions relate, in like manner, that God gave the Virgin in charge to Zachary, *ouacafalha Zacharia.* The Koran, in the *Surate* which treats of the family of Amram, adds to this fact a marvellous legend picked up among the Christian tribes in the desert. It says that Zachary, who went from time to time to visit his young relative, never did so without finding near her a quantity of the finest fruits of the Holy Land, and always out of season, which obliged him at length to inquire of Mary whence all these fine fruits came. Mary answered, "*Hou men and Allah ïarzoe man ïascha begaïr hissa,*" (All that you see comes from God, who provides what he pleases, without count or number.)—(D'Herbelot, Bibliothèque Orientale, t. ii. art. Miriam.)

(2) Levit. xxi. 3.

(3) Mary and *her young companions* (les almas) sung canticles at the passage of the Red Sea, accompanying themselves with timbrels.—(R. sal Yarhhi. Exod. xv.)

more especially consecrated to the service of Adonai than the other daughters of Israel, were dancing to the song of canticles and the sound of harps, at a short distance from the holy place, during a feast of the Lord, when the Benjaminites carried them off. This serious event did not put an end to this custom, which ceased only at the disastrous epoch when the ark was lost and the first temple destroyed.[1]

All the *almas* were probably admissible to these sacred choirs, when their reputation was not tarnished with any stain; but among them a chosen portion are distinguished, who are grouped about the altar, with greater fervour and perseverance. While the ark of God was still encamped in tents, *the women who watched and prayed at the door of the tabernacle* offered to God the brazen mirrors which they had brought from Egypt. They were doubtless pious widows, who had refused to form new engagements in order to attend more uninterruptedly to heavenly things, and *almas* devoted by their parents to the service of the sanctuary, who had been placed under the protection of these virtuous women. St. Jerom thus understands this passage of Exodus.

As the vow of parents could generally be redeemed, and as the redemption, fixed at a moderate sum,[2] was always effected at the end of a few years,[3] these temporary vows were called a loan

(1) These sacred dances, which brought to mind the passage of the Red Sea, and which were accompanied with hymns of praise, were considered among the Jews as a practice of so great piety, that we find them even among the severe therapeuts. "The sacred dance of the devout therapeuts," says Philo, "was composed of two choirs, one of men, the other of women,—the union of both was very harmonious and real music, because nothing was heard but very fine words, and the grave and decorous dancers had no other object than the honour and service of the God of Israel."—(Philo, de Vita cont.)

(2) Moses had fixed the ransom of this vow, by an express law, at a sum of fifty sicles at most. The sicle of silver weighed four Attic drachms, and was worth about fifteen pence of English money.

(3) The children, in this sort of bondage, retained their rights to the paternal inheritance, and could ransom themselves, if their parents did not redeem them. —(L'Abbé Guenée.) Josephus (Ant. lib. iv.) remarks that men and women who, after consecrating themselves voluntarily to the ministry, wished to break their vows, paid to the priests a certain sum, and that those who were unable to pay placed themselves at the discretion of the priest.

made to the Lord.[1] "I have lent him to the Lord," said Anna, when she took her little Samuel to Silo.[2]

After the return from the captivity, the influence of the Persians, who banished women from their religious solemnities,[3] told upon the institution of the *almas;* they ceased to form, in some degree, a body in the state, and to take an ostensible part in the ceremonies of worship. Under the pontiff kings, they lived in seclusion, and their days passed in so profound a retreat, that when they ran in dismay to the high priest Onias, at the time when the sacrilegious attempt of Heliodorus threw all Jerusalem into commotion, the Jewish historians considered the fact so unusual and wonderful that they recorded it in their annals.[4]

There were then, whatever some may have said, certain virgins attached to the service of the second temple at the time of the presentation of Mary; the institutions of the primitive Christians attest it,[5] and St. Ambrose, St. Jerom, and before them the proto-gospel of St. James, have affirmed it. But what passed during the abode of the Virgin in the temple? What were, at this interesting time of her life, her tastes, her habits, her practices of devotion? On this subject, there remain but few authentic documents. A traditionary life of the Mother of God, which St. Epiphanius, who lived in 390, considered then as very ancient, no doubt entered into those details, but it is lost. The gospel of the infancy of the Virgin, and of St. Jerom, though

(1) F. Croiset, Exerc. de Piété.

(2) Id circo et ego commodavi eum Domino.

(3) At Bombay, the descendants of the Persians have a temple consecrated to fire. They come in crowds upon the platform, with their brilliant white costumes and coloured turbans, to salute the rising of the sun, or to offer their homage to his last rays, by humbly prostrating before him. Their wives do not appear at that time; it is the hour when they go to fetch water from the wells.—(Buckingham, Picture of India.)

(4) Macch. i. 2.

(5) It is known that the primitive Christians, particularly those of Jerusalem, who were of Hebrew origin, preserved some institutions of the old law; of this number was that of virgins and widows, who are found attached to the primitive churches to exercise various good works in use by the sex.—(See Fleury, Mœurs des Israelites et des Chrétiens, p. 115.)

both inform us of the admission of Mary among the daughters of the Lord, confine their indications almost entirely to this fact. To fill up this vacant space of a history which God seems to have been pleased to envelop in clouds, we have nothing more than a few uncertain lines, some mutilated pages of the fathers, of which it is difficult, even by putting them carefully together in order, to make a satisfactory outline. No matter; like the Indian artizan, who joins together a broken piece of cloth, thread by thread, and who patiently endeavours to join the ends again by unravelling, tying together, and letting his shuttle glide with infinite precautions along this woof, worn out and easily broken, we shall apply laboriously to the work, and collect together the scattered shreds of the precious web of the life of the Virgin, to reunite the tissue, if it be practicable. With the persevering patience of Banian, we shall endeavour, not to make up a conjectural affair, which our profound respect for our subject would forbid, but to give, by the help of the best authorities and a long study of the manners of the Hebrews, the most precise idea, and that approaching as near as possible to the truth, of the almost cloistered life of Mary in the temple.

Some old legendary writers have delighted in surrounding the early childhood of the Virgin with a number of prodigies: we pass over in silence these marvellous events, which are not sufficiently proved; but what we ought to call attention to, is an inaccurate assertion, or rather an inadmissible one, which has been adopted confidently and without examination by some holy personages and religious writers.[1] From the Virgin's having always been sanctity itself, which no one disputes, it has been inferred that she must have been placed in the most sanctified part of the temple, that is, in the HOLY of HOLIES, which is materially untrue. The HOLY of HOLIES, *that* impenetrable sanctuary of the God of hosts, was closed against the whole of the Hebrew priesthood, except the high priest, who went into it only once a year, after a number of fasts, vigils, and purifica-

(1) St. Andrew of Crete, George of Nicomedia, &c.

tions. He did not present himself there without being enveloped in a thick cloud of perfumes, which interposed between him and the Divinity, "whom no mortal could see without dying," says the Scripture; in fine, he remained there only a few minutes, during which the people, prostrate with their faces to the ground, uttered loud sighs, for fear that he should there die. He himself afterwards gave a great feast to his friends, to rejoice with them for having escaped a danger so pressing and formidable.[1]

After this, let any one judge if it be possible that Mary was brought up in the HOLY of HOLIES!

The local traditions of Jerusalem protest no less loudly than common sense against this opinion, thrown out at hazard: the *Sakhra*, which was originally a Christian church, built on the site of the apartments of the Virgin, is a distinct appendage of the mosque of Omar, and is not enclosed within that edifice; yet the mosque of Omar is built on the very place where the temple stood.

F. Croiset, in his Exercises de Piété, has not adopted this opinion; but, unwilling to reject it altogether, he has attempted a sort of compromise. According to him, the Mother of God was not brought up in the HOLY of HOLIES, but the priests, struck with her admirable virtues, permitted her to go and pray there from time to time. The Jesuit father has forgotten several things in adopting this *mezzo-termine:* first, that woman, among the Hebrews, was a being reputed unclean, likened to a slave, and hardly bound to pray at all;[2] one who was banished to an enclosure which she could not pass beyond, and that the interior of

(1) Prideaux. Basnage, Histoire des Juifs, liv. v. c. 16.

(2) The impurity of the woman, according to the Rabbins, dates from the seduction of Eve by the serpent, and cannot be expiated but at the coming of their Messias. Prayer is not so obligatory upon her as upon man; she is not even bound to the greater part of the positive *commandments;* in fine, the Jews still say, in their morning prayer, "Blessed be thou, O Lord, King of the universe, for not having made me be born a woman." The woman in her humiliation says, on her part, with sorrowful resignation, "Blessed be thou, O Lord, who hast made me what thou hast pleased."—(Basnage, Hist. des Juifs, liv. vii. c. 10, p. 169.)

the temple was a forbidden place to her, even if she were a prophetess or the daughter of a king. Secondly, that the priests could not grant to Mary a privilege which they did not enjoy themselves, and that, moreover, it would have been exposing her to certain death.[1] Lastly, even supposing none of these prejudices and fears to have existed among the priests of Jehovah, they would not have suffered any one, on any account, to go into the HOLY of HOLIES, considering that it was important to withhold from the people the knowledge of the disappearance of the ark, which had been lost in some obscure cavern of the mountains of Judea ever since the days of Jeremias.[2]

This second version, therefore, is no more admissible than the first.

The education which Mary received in the temple was as carefully provided as was compatible with the knowledge of the time and the manners of the Hebrews; it turned principally on domestic work, from which the wife and daughter of Augustus Cæsar did not think themselves exempt in their imperial palace, and in the midst of the luxuries of Rome.[3] Brought up in the strict observance of the laws of Moses, and conforming to the customs of her nation, Mary rose at the song of the bird, at the hour "when the bad angels are silent, and when prayers are

(1) "The sanctuary is a place so holy," says Philo, "that there is no one among us but the high priest alone who is allowed to enter it, and that only once in the year, after a solemn fast, to burn perfumes there in honour of God, and humbly to beg of him that this year may be happy to all mankind. If any one, not only of the common people of our nation, but even one of the chief priests, dared to go in thither, or if the high priest himself went in twice a year, or more than once on the day when he is allowed to do so, it would cost him his life, without any possibility of saving him, so strictly has Moses, our legislator, commanded us to reverence this place, and render it inaccessible."—(Philo, ad Cadjum, c. 16.)

(2) The Jews are not agreed as to the fate of the ark after the ruin of their first people: some will have it that Jeremias hid it in a cavern in the mountains, the entrance to which it had never been possible to find again; others say that the holy King Josias, admonished by Holda, the prophetess, that the temple would be destroyed soon after his death, had this precious deposit placed in a subterranean vault which Solomon had had constructed.

(3) Augustus never wore any other garments but those woven by his wife or his daughter; and Alexander the Great, by his mother and his sisters.

heard most favourably."[1] She dressed herself with extreme decency, out of respect for the glory of God, who penetrates everywhere, and beholds the actions of man, even in the darkest night; then she thanked the Lord for having added another day to her days, and having preserved her during her sleep from the snares of the evil spirit.[2] Her toilet was not long, and there was no refinement about it; she wore neither pearl bracelets nor gold chains "inlaid with silver," nor purple tunics, like the daughters of the princes of her race. A robe of hyacinth blue, of soft and velvet-like appearance, like that flower of the field, a white tunic confined by a plain girdle, with the ends hanging free, a long veil with its folds inartificially but gracefully arranged, and so formed as quickly and completely to cover the face, and lastly, shoes to match the robe, composed the oriental costume of Mary.[3]

After the customary ablutions, the Virgin, her companions, and the pious women who were responsible to the priests and to God for this sacred deposit, proceeded to the tribune surrounded with balconies,[4] where the *almas* seated themselves in the place of honour.[5] The sun was beginning to gild with his early rays the

(1) Basnage, liv. vii. c. 17, p. 309.

(2) Basnage, *loco citato.*

(3) The Annunciades of Genoa wore in the sixteenth century the costume of the Blessed Virgin, that is to say, *white below and sky-blue above, that such a habit might cause a continual remembrance of her. The slippers of the choir nuns in like manner are covered with leather of sky-blue colour.*—(Rule of the Annunciades of Genoa, c. 2.) M. de Lamartine found in those Eastern regions, where everything seems unchangeable, the costume of Mary in that of the women of Nazareth. "They wear," says the traveller poet, "a long tunic of sky-blue, fastened by a white girdle, the ends of which hang down to the ground; the full folds of a white tunic gracefully fall over the blue." M. de Lamartine traces back this costume to the times of Abraham and Isaac, and there is nothing improbable in this supposition. We see but a very slight difference between the costumes adopted in the sixteenth century from the traditions of Italy, and that which the French traveller found in the very places themselves.

(4) In the feast of the drawing of the waters, the men were placed above the galleries, which went all round the peristyle of the women.

(5) Origen, St. Basil, St. Gregory of Nyssa, and St. Cyril have preserved to us the tradition which assigns to the virgins of the temple an honourable and separate place in the peristyle of the women.

distant mountains of Arabia, the eagle was soaring in the cloud, the sacrifice burned upon the brazen altar to the sound of the morning trumpets, and Mary, with her head bowed down under her veil, after repeating the eighteen prayers of Esdras, besought of God, with all Israel, the Christ so long promised to the earth, and so slow to come. "O God! may thy name be glorified and sanctified in this world, which thou hast created according to thy good pleasure; *let thy kingdom come:* may redemption flourish, and may the Messias come speedily."[1]

And the people answered in chorus, "Amen! amen!" Then they sung the concluding verses of that beautiful psalm attributed to the prophets Aggeus and Zacharias:—

"The Lord looseth them that are fettered: the Lord enlighteneth the blind.

"The Lord lifteth up them that are cast down; the Lord loveth the just.

"The Lord keepeth the strangers: he will support the fatherless and the widow; and the ways of sinners he will destroy.

"The Lord shall reign for ever: thy God, O Sion, unto generation and generation."[2]

The reading of the *schema*[3] and the blessing of the priest concluded this public prayer, which was made at night and morning.[4]

(1) This prayer, which is called *Kaddisch*, is the most ancient of all those which the Jews have preserved, and as it is read in the Chaldaic tongue, it is believed to be one of the prayers which had been made after the return from Babylon.—(Basn., liv. vii. c. 17, p. 314.) Prideaux affirms that it was used long before our Lord's time, and that the apostles often offered it with the people in the synagogues. It was recited often in the service, and the assembly were obliged to answer *Amen* several times.

(2) Leo of Modena. Maimonides.

(3) Leo of Modena, c. 11, p. 29. By the *schema* is understood three different sections of Deuteronomy and Numbers. It is a kind of profession of faith which is recited night and morning, by which they confess that there is but one God, who delivered his people out of Egypt.

(4) It is certain that the Blessed Virgin must have assisted very often at the public prayers of morning and evening: these prayers were considered more efficacious than others, and there are even Hebrew doctors who maintain that God hears none but these.

After fulfilling this first religious duty with indescribable fervour, Mary and her young companions resumed their accustomed occupations. Some turned swiftly with their active fingers spindles of cedar or ithel,[1] others worked in purple, hyacinth, and gold upon the veil of the temple, or the rich girdles of the priests; while groups, bending forward over a Sidonian loom, were employed in executing the varied designs of that magnificent tapestry for which the valiant women deserved the praises of all Israel, and which Homer himself has extolled.[2] The Virgin surpassed all the daughters of her people in these beautiful works, so highly appreciated by the ancients. St. Epiphanius informs us that she excelled in embroidery and in the art of working in wool, fine linen, and gold;[3] the Proto-gospel of St. James exhibits her to us seated before a spindle of wool dyed purple, which turned round under her light hands like the quivering leaf of the aspen-tree;[4] and the Christians of the East have perpetuated the traditionary opinion of her unrivalled skill in spinning the flax of Pelusium,[5] by giving the name of the *Virgin's thread* to those webs of dazzling whiteness, and texture almost vaporous, which hover over the deep valleys in the damp mornings of autumn. The serious and pure wives of the first faithful, in remembrance of these domestic occupations, which the Queen of angels did not disdain, never failed to consecrate to her a distaff

(1) The *ithel* is a species of acacia, which growns in Arabia; it is of a fine black, and resembles ebony: it is thought to be the setim wood of Moses.

(2) See the Iliad, lib. vi.

(3) In the middle ages, in memory of the Virgin working in linen, the weavers had placed themselves under the banner of the Annunciation. The manufacturers of gold brocade and silk stuffs had for their patroness *Our Lady the Rich*, and bore her image on their banner, heavy with magnificent embroidery.—(Alex. Monteil, Hist. des Français des divers états.)

(4) The church of Jerusalem had early consecrated this memorial by numbering among its treasures the spindles of Mary. These spindles were sent afterwards to the Empress Pulcheria, who placed them in the church of Hodegos, at Constantinople.

(5) The vestments which the high priests wore in the morning were, says the Misnah, of fine linen of Pelusium, a town of Egypt where the flax was exquisite.

surrounded with little bands of purple, and supplied with spotless wool.[1]

But the talents and knowledge of the Virgin were not confined to this. St. Ambrose attributes to her a perfect understanding of the sacred books, and St. Anselm maintains that she knew perfectly that ancient Hebrew, the language of the terrestrial Paradise,[2] in which God traced with his potent finger, *on very thick precious stones*,[3] the ten precepts of the Decalogue. Whether Mary, by studying the idiom of Anna and Debora, had been initiated, during her solitary vigils, in the sublime conceptions of the *seers* of Israel, or whether she received from that sanctifying spirit, who had so richly endowed her, a breath of poetical inspiration similar to those harmonious breezes which lightly touched the Eolian harp of King David,[4] still we cannot deny that the young prophetess, who gave to the new law its most beautiful canticle, must have known the sweetest and most sublime inspirations of genius. Certainly, the woman who composed the *Magnificat* was no young girl of the ignorant common people, as some Protestant authors have not been afraid to say, and she combined with unequalled sanctity talents of the highest order. Nevertheless, this brilliant side of her intelligence was hardly perceived, so adroit was she in concealing it beneath her evangelical modesty. Knowing the delicate duties and true interests of her sex, she avoided display with extreme care, and passed along without noise, like a silent star, that pursues its course

(1) This custom still exists in some villages of the north and west of France.

(2) According to the rabbins and commentators on the Bible, the language of the terrestrial Paradise was the ancient Hebrew.

(3) Hebrew tradition.—(Basn., liv. vi. c. 16.) According to some oriental authors, the tables of the law were of red rubies or carbuncles; but the most common opinion among the Arabs and Mussulmans is that they were emeralds, in the inside of which the characters were so cut as to be legible on every side.—(D'Herbelot, Bibliothèque Orientale, t. ii.)

(4) According to an ancient Jewish tradition, David had a harp which played at night when a *particular breeze* blew. Basnage ridiculed these strings which sound of themselves at the night breeze, and openly treats this assertion as an *absurdity*. The invention, or rather the re-discovery of the Eolian harps, the magic sounds of which enchant the parks of the English, has justified the rabbins.

through the clouds. The rich treasures of her mind and heart have been but rarely and imperfectly revealed to the earth; they were the roses of Yemen, which the young Arab girl conceals beneath her veil, and the softened perfume of which is hardly perceived.

An ancient poet said with servility of Augustus that he was himself the work of several ages, and that, since the days of the creation, all the industry of nature had been put in request to produce him. What was an hyperbole carried to an absurd length in speaking of the sanguinary nephew of Cæsar, becomes a truth demonstrated when applied to the Virgin. Mary is the masterpiece of nature, the flower of the old generations, and the wonder of ages. Never had the earth seen, never will the earth see, so many perfections combined in a simple daughter of men. All was grace, holiness, grandeur in this blessed creature: conceived in the friendship of God, sanctified before her birth, she knew not those passions which disorder the soul, and sin which corrupts the heart. Attracted towards good by a sweet and natural inclination, by favour of her immaculate conception, her pure and innocent actions were like those coats of snow which are silently heaped upon the lofty summits of the mountains, adding purity to purity, and whiteness to whiteness, till a dazzling cone is raised, on which the light darts playfully, and which forces man to turn away his eyes, like the sun. It has not been given to any second creature to present such a life to the sovereign Judge of men; Jesus Christ alone surpassed her,—but Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Mary entered the temple of God, like one of those spotless victims which the Spirit of the Lord had shown to Malachy. Beautiful, young, nobly born, and qualified to aspire to every position among a people who often placed beauty upon the throne,[1] she attached herself to the corners of the altar by a vow

(1) "It is neither climate, nor diet, nor bodily exercise which forms the beauty of the human form; it is the moral sentiment of virtue, which cannot subsist without religion. Beauty of countenance is the true physiognomy of the soul."—(Bernardin de Saint Pierre, Etudes de la Nature, étude 10.)

of virginity. By this vow, unheard of before, Mary *broke down the fence* which separated the old law from the new, and plunged so deeply *into the sea of the evangelical virtues*, that it might be said that she had already sounded almost all its depths when her divine Son came to reveal it to the children of men.

God does not change his ways abruptly; he announces, he prepares long before, the great events which are to change the face of the earth: a precursor was needed for the Messias, and he found him in the person of St. John the Baptist; a preliminary was requisite to the new law, and the virtues of Mary were to the gospel what a cool and cheerful dawn is to a fine day.

St. Epiphanius, quoted by Nicephorus, has left us a charming portrait of the Virgin; this portrait, sketched in the fourth century, from traditions now effaced, and manuscripts which we no longer possess, is the only one which has come down to us.

The Virgin, according to this bishop, was not tall of stature, though her height was a little above the middle size; her colour, slightly darkened, like that of the Sulamite, by the sun of her country, had the rich tint of ripe ears of corn; her hair was light, her eyes lively, the pupil being rather of an olive colour, her eyebrows perfectly arched, and of the finest black; her nose, remarkably perfect, was aquiline; her lips rosy; the shape of her face a fine oval; her hands and fingers long.

All the fathers eagerly attest, with one accord, the admirable beauty of the Virgin; St. Denis the Areopagite, who had seen the divine Mary, assures us that *she was a dazzling beauty, and that he should have adored her as a goddess, if he had not known that there is but one God.*

But it was not to this assemblage of natural perfections that Mary owed the power of her beauty; it emanated from a higher source. St. Ambrose understood it well, when he said that this attractive covering was but a transparent veil which let all the virtues be seen through it, and that her soul, the most noble and purest that ever was, next to the soul of Jesus Christ, was entirely revealed in her look. The natural beauty of Mary was but the remote reflexion of her intellectual and imperishable beauties:

she was the most beautiful of women, because she was the most chaste and most holy of the daughters of Eve.[1]

God has made a palace of pearl-coloured shell for the pearl of the Green Sea;[2] but it is the pearl, and not its brilliant shell, which is set in gold, and with which the diadems of kings are incrusted. The fathers were not here mistaken; and accordingly, in what they have left us about the person of Mary, they have devoted a considerable part to moral beauties,—the only ones which are not the food of worms. We are about to collect the little precious stones which they have scattered over their writings, to compose with them a mosaic which may exhibit a second portrait of her who was, says St. Sophronius, "the garden of pleasure of the Lord."[3]

The greatest propriety reigned in all the actions of the Virgin; she was good, affable, compassionate, and never tired of hearing the long complaints of the afflicted. She spoke little, always to the purpose, and never did an untruth defile her lips. Her voice was sweet, penetrating, and her words had something unctuous and consoling, which shed calm over the soul. She was the first in watchings, the most exact in fulfilling the divine law, the most profound in humility, the most perfect in every virtue. She was never seen in anger; she never offended, afflicted or railed at any one. She was an enemy to pomp, simple in her attire, simple in her manners, and never had a thought of displaying her beauty, her ancient nobility, or the rich treasures of her mind and heart. Her presence seemed to sanctify all around it, and the sight of her banished the thought of the things of earth. Her politeness was no vain formality, made up of words of false-

(1) We know that David, Solomon, and the other kings of Juda, often placed upon their royal couch women of obscure condition; the celebrated Sulamite of Solomon was, it is said, a young country girl of the little village of Sulam, situated at a short distance from Jerusalem. In the time of Mary, Herod the Great had espoused Marianne, the daughter of a plain sacrificing priest, on account of her beauty.

(2) *Bahr-al-Akhdhar*, a name of the Persian Gulf.

(3) "Vere Virgo erat hortus deliciarum in quo consita sunt universa florum genera et odoramenta virtutum."—(Sophron., Serm. de Ass.)

hood: it was an expansion of universal benevolence which came from the soul. In fine, her look already discovered the Mother of mercy—the Virgin of whom it has since been said: "She would ask of God forgiveness even for Lucifer, if Lucifer himself asked for forgiveness."

Though very scantily provided with riches, Mary was liberal to the poor, and her young maiden alms often dropped unperceived into that chest which was fixed to one of the columns of the peristyle, into which Jesus at a later period saw the widow's mite fall. St. Ambrose makes known to us the pure and sacred source from which Mary derived her alms; she deprived herself of everything, granting only to nature what she could not withhold from it without dying, and seemed to live, like the grasshoppers upon air and dew.[1] Her fasts, which were frequent and rigorous, were in like manner beneficial to the poor. But the fasts of the Blessed Virgin were not like our fasts in the north, which last only for a morning, and are confined to the privation of certain kinds of food; they were an abstinence from everything, which began in the evening at sunset, and ended the next day at the rising of the stars.[2] All this time Mary denied herself all that could gratify her taste and her heart; she imposed upon herself the hardest work, the most disagreeable works of mercy, put on her poorest garments, slept on the ground, and did not allow

(1) The ancients believed that grasshoppers lived on air and dew.—(Philo, de Vita cont., p. 831.) Homer, in the third book of the Iliad:—

. . . . . Τεττίγεσσι ἐοικότες ὅιτε καθ' ὑλῆν
Δενδρέω ἐφεζόμενοι ὅπα λειριόεσσαν ἱεῖσι.

"Like grasshoppers, which, perched upon the trees, send forth a sweet sound, after sipping a little dew." "Grasshoppers feed only on dew."—(Theocritus, Idyl 4:—μή πρῶκας σιτίζεται ὅσπερ ὁ τέττιξ;) "Does he not feed on dew, like the grasshopper?" And Virgil:—

"Dum thymo pascentur apes, dum rore cicadæ."

"While bees are fed on thyme, while grasshoppers on dew."

On this account Callimachus has called dew, πρώϊον τέττιγος εἶδαρ, "the food of the grasshopper."

(2) The Jews did not consider that day as a fast on which the sun did not set.

herself, during these days of mortification and tears, which were often prolonged for weeks together, anything but a slender repast, composed of bread baked in the embers, bitter herbs, and a cup of water from the fountain of Siloe.[1] Her meditations were frequent, and her prayer so recollected, so attentive, so profound, that her soul seemed to dissolve in adoration before the Eternal. The roaring of the tempest and the noise of the thunder, which used to make Cæsar take refuge in the subterranean vaults of his palace,[2] did not reach the ear of the young girl; completely absorbed in her religious duties, her soul was at the feet of the great Author of the universe, beyond the limits of the world and the region of storms. "Never," says St. Ambrose, "was any one gifted with a more sublime gift of contemplation; her mind, always in agreement with her heart, never lost sight of HIM, whom she loved more ardently than all the seraphim together; her whole life was but one continual exercise of the purest love of her God, and when the sun came to weigh down her eyelids, her heart still watched and prayed."[3]

Such were the virtues, such were the occupations of Mary in the temple; she shone there among her youthful companions like a rich diamond, which, set among other precious stones, eclipses them all by its brilliancy. Thus it happened that old men who had grown grey in the priesthood never passed by her without blessing her, and considered her as the richest ornament of the holy house.

(1) Basnage, liv. vii. c. 18; Fleury, Mœurs des Israelites, p. 104.

(2) Augustus, if we may believe Suetonius, was afraid of thunder and lightning with a weakness scarcely excusable in a woman. At the least appearance of a storm, he went and hid himself under deep vaults, where the noise of the thunder and the flashes of lightning could not penetrate.

(3) St. Ambr., De Virg., lib. ii.

CHAPTER VI.

MARY AN ORPHAN.

It must be owned, though it be a strange thing, that the history of the Virgin is barren of facts and full of interruptions: one might compare it to the majestic ruins of some ancient city of the desert. Here, gigantic pillars, whose bases are as immovable as those of the mountains; there, porticoes which the Arab, fond of marvellous tales, proclaims as the work of the genii; farther on, temples buried in sand, which the imagination can still build up again; and then at intervals a plain of sand, bare and barren, which has not a single blade of grass for the camel of the Bedouin. Instead of the apostles,—who, it would seem, were too much taken up with the grand person of Christ to think of his earthly family,—the fathers have introduced us to the virtues of St. Ann: we have entered after them beneath her humble roof; we have been witnesses of her vows, of her fervent prayers, of the joys of her late maternity, of the effusion of her gratitude; but here the thread of tradition becomes so loose that it breaks continually, and the rest of St. Ann's life is almost entirely matter of conjecture. This mother, who had obtained her blessed daughter after so many fasts and prayers, who had surrounded her childhood with so much love, who had brought her in her arms to the Lord,[1] and deposited her with tears in his sanctuary, appears again upon the scene but for a moment,—and then it is to die. Still it is not to be supposed that the spouse of Joachim remained nine years without seeing Mary again. The exterior buildings of the temple, where children consecrated to the God of Israel were brought up, could not have been forbidden to mothers: a mother has also sacred and religious rights; all nations declare them inviolable, and more-

(1) St. Alphonsus, Le Glorie di Maria, Disc. 3, p. 59.

over, the Scripture informs us that Anna, the wife of Elcana, freely visited her son at Silo, on solemn days, and that she never failed to bring a tunic woven with her own hands to the young prophet whom she had *lent* to the Lord. Anna had had after the birth of Samuel several children, whom she beheld growing up under her eyes like young olive-trees, and who shared with the little servant of the tabernacle her maternal solicitude: St. Ann had none but Mary;[1] the sum of her happiness, the hope of her old age, the source of her joy on earth, were all centred in her. It is not then to be doubted that, in company with her spouse, she came to see her every time that her piety led her to the temple, and that she also sat up, by the light of her lamp at home, or by the white light of the moon,[2] to weave the virginal robes of her child.

It is believed that St. Ann and St. Joachim returned to their home after the presentation of Mary, and dwelt there some years before they settled finally in Jerusalem. Joachim, who was not an artizan, like Joseph, apparently cultivated the small property inherited from his forefathers, and enjoyed that happy mediocrity which has always been the ambition of sages, great men, and poets, in their moments of grumbling at fortune.[3] Churches have been erected at Sephoris, Nazareth, and Jerusalem, on sites which formed part of his patrimony; but the vineyard or field of his fathers must have been in the environs of Sephoris: this was the cause of his returning to lower Galilee. Joachim was a true Israelite, much attached to the law of Moses; he went

(1) Some have given Ann another daughter, named Mary, born twenty years before the Blessed Virgin; this tradition has not been received by the Church.

(2) The Jewish women spun together during the summer by moonlight, since the Jewish doctors authorized a husband to repudiate his wife when the women who *spun by moonlight* spoke ill of her.—(Sotah, c. 6, p. 250.) This custom of spinning by moonlight still continues in many southern countries.

(3) According to St. Gregory of Nyssa, the father of the Blessed Virgin was "an honourable citizen," of signal piety, and much fearing God. F. de Valverde assures us, on the testimony of some fathers of the Church, that enjoying easy circumstances, Ann and Joachim gave one part of their savings to the temple and the other to the distressed.—(Life of Jesus Christ, t. i. p. 46.)

up to the temple at all the solemn festivals with his wife and some of his relations, after the custom of the Hebrews, and it is to be supposed that the desire of seeing his daughter increased his attraction for the ceremonies of divine worship. With what joy did his good and pious partner take her travelling veil to journey to the holy city! How long did those tracks which she saw winding across the mountains and plains appear to travel over! She reached by sight, she gained twenty times over in thought, before she arrived at them in reality, the bushes of nopals, the tufts of rose-bay, the masses of green oaks or sycamores which arose at intervals upon her journey; for when each of these points were gained, she was the nearer to her daughter,—her daughter, the gift of the Lord, the child of miracle, she whom an angel had proclaimed the glory of Israel! With what emotion must she have hailed, from the bottom of the valley, that tower of Antonia which arose, splendid and menacing, on its base of polished marble,[1] to protect the house of prayer! and how much must the sight of the temple, which contained her child and her God, have affected that tender and holy soul!

When the evening was come, and the trumpets of the priests called the people to the ceremony,[2] Ann hastened to adore God, and cast her eyes upon her daughter, whom she had not seen for whole months. The court, which had no ceiling but the sky, mingled the dazzling light of its chandeliers[3] with the flickering light of the stars; thousands of lights intersected each other

(1) The tower of Antonia might be considered as the citadel of the temple; it had been anciently the palace of the Asmonean princes. The rock on which it was seated was inaccessible on every side, and fifty cubits high. Herod had had it cased with marble from the foot to the summit, so that no one might be able to go up or down it.—(Joseph., Ant. Jud., lib. xv. c. 14, and de Bello, lib. ii. c. 16.)

(2) The religious festivals of the Jews always began in the evening.

(3) These chandeliers were of gold, and fifty cubits high. The light which they diffused was seen, say the rabbins, who were born to exaggerate, to an incredible distance from Jerusalem, and even in the towns the houses were so well lighted that, without the help of their lamps, the cooks could pick out the different kinds of grain for their soups.—(Talmud. tract Succa., fol. 3.)

beneath the portions adorned with fresh garlands;[1] and the princes of the priests passed through the crowd with their splendid ornaments, brought from the borders of India by the caravans of Palmyra.[2] From time to time, the insulated harmonies of harps seemed to accompany the low shrill sound, like the confused noise of the waves,[3] which a multitude of Hebrews made at their prayers, who had come from the banks of the Nile, the Euphrates, and the Tiber, to bend their knees before the only altar of the God of their fathers.[4] Amidst this immense concourse of believers, national and foreign, Ann, who prayed fervently, raised her head but for a moment: it was when Mary and her young companions were passing along, white and veiled, with lamps in their hands, like the wise virgins of the gospel.

When the feast was over, Ann, after having blessed and embraced Mary, took the road of the mountains again with Joachim; she departed from Jerusalem with slow steps, without daring to look back, and carried with her happiness and recollections to last her all the time till the next festival.

When age and labour had worn out the strength of Joachim, and he was no longer able to cultivate his paternal land by himself, he thought of coming to live near to his daughter; the holy couple finally quitted lower Galilee, and came to live at Jerusalem, in a quarter near the temple. Ann had then arrived at the summit of her wishes: she could serve the Lord in his holy house, and see Mary often. How many times, during the fine summer evenings, while turning her spindle on the terrace roof of her house, must she have let it slip out of her motionless fingers, while her maternal looks were thoughtfully fixed on the

(1) These green garlands were put on during the Feast of Tabernacles.—(Basn., liv. vii. c. 16.)

(2) The dresses which the priests wore in the evening on solemn feasts came from India, and were very expensive.—(Basn., liv. viii. c. 15.)

(3) We know that the Jews and Arabs pray aloud.

(4) While the temple existed, the Jews made it a particular point of devotion to repair thither. More than eleven hundred thousand persons perished at the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus, because they were assembled for the Feast of the Passover, when it was besieged.—(Joseph., lib. vii. c. 17.)

gold and cedar roof of the temple? "Where a man's treasure is," says the Scripture, "there is his heart."

St. Ann could have shortened the term of this painful absence, as the law of Moses would have accepted her compensation. She did not desire it: her gratitude towards God spoke more powerfully than her maternal tenderness; and when the voice of religion was heard, the cry of nature was appeased.

The Virgin had lived nearly nine years secluded in the temple,[1] when the first dark cloud came to sadden the sweet and serene sky of her young life; her beloved father, Joachim, the just man, fell seriously ill, and soon the symptoms of approaching dissolution were apparent. Alarmed at his situation, his relatives and friends hastened to afford him a thousand testimonies of affection and sympathy; for there reigned a great and laudable union among the families of Juda. The dying man benignantly smiled upon his friends and relations; like Jacob, he had long been a sojourner upon the earth, and it mattered but little to him that the wind came and overturned his tabernacle, for beyond this planet of earth, he beheld in spirit the happy regions where he was going to repose in the bosom of Abraham.

When the gradual exhaustion of his strength had given the aged man to understand that life was departing from him, he made aloud, in presence of all, the confession of his sins, after the manner of the Hebrews,[2] and offered up his death to the sovereign Judge in expiation of the faults inherent in our nature, from which the most just are not exempt. This duty fulfilled, Joachim asked for his daughter, to give her his blessing. Mary came;[3] her ardent prayers for the preservation of the author of

(1) F. Croiset, Exercises de Piété, t. xviii. p. 59.

(2) Confession among the Hebrews is of the highest antiquity; the Jews made it, at the hour of death, not only *aloud*, but *before ten persons and a rabbin.* Aaron Ben-Berachia, in his book entitled Maavar Jobbok, where he treats of the art of dying well, and of the manner of assisting the dying, relates the manner of confessing sins, and the prayers of the agony. Abraham Ben-Isaac Laniado has also made a book entitled The Buckler of Abraham, a work esteemed by the Jews, in which he treats of the confession of sins.—(See also Basn., liv. vii. c. 24.)

(3) It was a custom which came down from the patriarchs, that children

her days had not been heard: the *jealous God* was pleased to dissolve by degrees the terrestrial attachments of the spouse whom he had chosen for himself, that she might no longer have any support upon earth but his.

Pious authors have been of opinion that at the moment when Joachim stretched out his hands in the attitude of blessing over his child, a revelation from above allowed him to see all at once the glorious destiny to which Heaven called his daughter: the joy of the elect was diffused over his venerable face; he dropped his arms, bowed down his head, and died.

The house then resounded with wailings and shrill cries; the women struck their bosoms and tore their hair;[1] the men covered their heads with ashes and rent their garments; while certain Jewish matrons, moved by a principle of devotion and charity, extended a thick veil over the pale but serene countenance of the just man, whom it was no longer permitted to see in this world, and bent his thumb in his hand, which they left open, as a sign of being abandoned by all earthly things.

After washing the body with water mixed with myrrh and the leaves of dry roses, these pious women wrapped it up in a linen winding-sheet, which they bound round with bandages after the manner of Egypt. Then, having opened all the doors and windows of the house,[2] they lighted a brazen lamp with several lights near the corpse, the lamp of the dead, which cast its mournful reflexion over the funeral couch.

The next day a numerous train, in which were seen some flute-players,[3] stopped before the house of the dead. The relations

should receive the blessing of their dying father: Mary must have conformed to this custom; her retirement in the temple was not a monastic enclosure, and St. Joachim lived at that time in Jerusalem.

(1) St. Jerom remarks, that in his time, most of the Jews mangled their skin at the death of their near relations, and made themselves bald by tearing off their hair, which they sacrificed to death.

(2) Dead bodies, among the Jews, defile and render unclean those who touch them.—(Misnah, Ordo puritatum.) "When the doors are shut, the house of the dead is regarded as a sepulchre, and consequently it is defiled; when the doors are open, on the contrary, the uncleanness departs."—(Maimonides.)

(3) Jesus Christ found minstrels who made a great rout at the door of a

made their way to the upper chamber, where Joachim had been laid forth, and deposited the corpse upon a litter,[1] which they took up upon their shoulders. They passed along the streets of Jerusalem, chanting funeral canticles, accompanied by the soft and plaintive sound of flutes, and above which were heard the loud lamentations of the mourners. Ann and Mary were present at the funeral, and walked with their heads down, among the matrons of their family, who shed streams of tears.[2]

The procession passed the sheep-gate, which afterwards, among the Christians, bore the name of the Gate of the Virgin. When they had arrived at the place of interment, the sound of the flutes, the canticles, and lamentations ceased for a short time, and he who conducted the mourning made this address to the corpse:—"Blessed be God who formed thee, fed thee, and has taken away thy life. O ye dead, he knows your number, and he will one day raise you up again. Blessed be he who takes away life, and restores it!"[3]

A small bag of earth was laid upon the head of the dead man, then the sepulchre was opened,—a dark cave, which was called *the house of the living*,[4] where the patriarch was going to sleep his

ruler whose daughter he had raised to life. Maimonides says, that the poorest Jew is obliged to hire two flute-players and a female mourner for the funeral of his wife, and that the rich must increase the number in proportion to their wealth.—(See also Fleury, Manners of the Israelites, p. 106.)

(1) These funeral litters were used long before coffins, which are still unknown to the Arabs, who bury their dead in a linen cloth only, which gives the jackals, who prowl about the cemeteries by night, the facility of disinterring corpses to devour them.

(2) Women and children assisted at the funerals of their husbands and fathers. The widow of Naim followed the corpse of her son; Joseph conducted the obsequies of his father; this custom still continues in Judea. The children of the Hebrews received the blessing of their parents, closed their eyelids, and accompanied them to the field of repose, to gather them to the bones of their forefathers.—(Salvador, Hist. des Institutions de Moïse et du peuple Hebreu, t. ii. p. 398.)

(3) Leo of Modena, Cont. des Juifs. Buxtorf, Syn. Hebr., p. 502.

(4) The sepulchre should have been called *the house of the dead;* but they gave it, on the contrary, the title of *house of the living*, to indicate that the immortal soul still lives after the separation from the body: this denomination is

last sleep, waiting for the other members of his family. Then cries arose from all sides, enough to wring the heart. Ann threw herself upon the mortal remains of her spouse, to pay him the last adieu, and soon she was carried off in a state of insensibility. After consigning to the earth the sacred remains of the just man, they rolled up to the entrance of the sepulchral cave an enormous stone, which no one must remove *under pain of excommunication.* The funeral cries began again, and the spectators, pulling up three several times a tuft of grass, and throwing it each time behind them, said in a mournful tone, "They shall flourish as the grass of the field!" These rites terminated the obsequies of the descendant of the kings of Juda, the father of Mary, the grand father of Jesus Christ according to the flesh.[1]

The Blessed Virgin's heart was wounded by this first grief, which was the prelude to so many others; it was her apprenticeship to sorrow. Adversity reached her on the threshold of adolescence; the noble child did not shrink back on her way; she wept,—for her soul, like that of her divine Son, was never dry or insensible,—but she drained the bitter cup, saying to God, "O Jehovah, thy will be done!" The mother and daughter put on mourning after the manner of the Hebrews; they were clothed in a coarse camlet, tight, and without folds, which was called a hair shirt; the head and feet bare, the face hidden in a fold of their robes, keeping fast and abstinence,[2] they remained sitting

attributed to the Pharisees.—(Basn., liv. vii. c. 24.) The rabbins give an exact description of these sepulchres. They make the entrance to them very narrow, for usually a stone rolled up to the entrance sufficed to close them. They left a great space empty, where the bearers went in and deposited the coffin, before they set it in its place. They hollowed out a certain number of niches in the sides and at the end, in which they placed the bodies of each family. Tombs were greatly respected; it was not allowed to pass over them by making an aqueduct or a high-road through them, nor to go thither to cut wood, nor to lead flocks there to feed. They were placed on the high-roads, in order to excite the remembrance of those who passed by, and preserve the memory of the dead.—(Lightfoot, Cent. Chorogr., c. 100.) In the gospel, we see that the tomb of Lazarus was a cave closed by a large stone.

(1) Salom. Ben-Virgæ, Hist. Jud., p. 193; Leo of Modena, Cont. relig. des Juifs; Basn., liv. vii. c. 25.

(2) Fasting was very severe among the Jews; they were obliged to be

on the ground for seven days, giving way to tears with their relations, and praying for the soul of the deceased.[1] When the seven days were passed, Ann had lamps lighted in the synagogue, where she requested prayers for her husband, and added alms in proportion to her fortune. Mary, on her part, fasted every week, on the day on which she had become an orphan, and prayed every night and morning for the repose of her father's soul. These fasts and prayers for the dead continued for the space of eleven months.[2]

"Welcome, O misfortune, if thou comest alone," say the Greeks. This first affliction was followed by one still more poignant, and another mourning soon came to be mingled with the mourning for Joachim. Scarcely was the mortuary lamp extinguished in the sorrowful abode of St. Ann when it became necessary to light it afresh; hardly were the tears dried up which the Virgin had shed for one of the authors of her days when she had to deplore the loss of the other.[3] One evening, Mary, accompanied by some of her relatives, went down from the temple to the narrow and dark street where her mother dwelt. The red and feeble ray of a lamp gleamed across one of the narrow trellised windows of the humble dwelling. Before the threshold were grouped together in silence those women, who even to this day throughout the East bewail the dead as a means of earning their support; like birds of evil omen which forebode funerals, these unlucky creatures were on the look out for some family in tears, to come and hire their venal lamentations.[4]

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contented with certain kinds of pulse—beans, for example, or lentils, which were mourning diet. Eggs were allowed, for the form of an egg, being round, and in the shape of a globe, is the image of a man in affliction. Wine was no less forbidden than meat.—(Basn., liv. vii. c. 28.)

(1) During the days of mourning they recited the forty-ninth psalm.—(L. de Mod., Cont. des Juifs, p. 182. Lightfoot, in John, p. 1072.)

(2) Basnage, liv. vii. c. 11, p. 182.

(3) According to the best authorities, St. Ann and St. Joachim died at a short interval one from the other.

(4) In the Levant women are hired to bewail the dead, who have no other means of earning their living. They are paid so much per hour and they exert

St. Ann exerted her failing strength to bless her daughter, recommended her pathetically to her kinsfolk, but above all to HIM who is the father of the orphan, and slept the sleep of the just.[1] Mary bent down in tears over the cold visage of her mother; her light hair mixed with the grey hairs of the departed: it seemed as if she would have brought her to life again with her tears; but the breath of God alone can reanimate the dead! After the first burst of this sorrow, which was so justifiable, she closed with her hands the eyelids of the saint, and gave her one long and sorrowful embrace,—the last adieu of her people.[2]

The grief of the young orphan was silent, profound, and nobly endured. Having no longer any other reliance upon earth but Providence, she took refuge in the bosom of God; thence, as from the recess of a tranquil bay, she heard the distant roaring of the storms of the world, and understood all the vanity of the things of life;—the vanity of rank, of grandeur, of fortune, of beauty—things which glitter and pass away, like the bubble upon the course of the wintry torrent, which itself disappears at the end of a season.

It is to this period of mourning, insulation, and solitary meditations, that a certain historian has judiciously attached the vow of perpetual virginity made by Mary;[3] it no where appears that this vow was known to Ann and Joachim, and without their consent it would not have been valid in the eyes of the law, either civil or religious.[4] It was after their death, then, that Mary chose

themselves to earn their salary by uttering the most piercing cries.—(Burckhardt, Voyage en Arabie, t ii. p. 139.)

(1) Grave historians affirm that the Virgin was present at the death of her mother, which is quite conformable to the manners of the Hebrews.

(2) This custom is very ancient; for Philo, recording the lamentations of Jacob for the premature death of his son, makes him say that he shall not have the consolation "to close his eyes, and give him the parting kiss."

(3) Descoutures, Vie de la Sainte Vierge, p. 27.

(4) A young girl might make vows among the Jews, and she could even make a vow of virginity; but this vow was annulled by the authority of the father, because, being under the father's power, she could not violate the power which nature gives. All vows made by a young girl or a married woman, unknown to or contrary to the will of a father or a husband, were null.—(Num. c. xxx.)

the Lord for her portion, and consecrated herself by vow to his service, without any limitation of time, says Bernardin de Busto, and with the intention of never departing from the temple. Like the august head of her race, the Virgin found that "one day passed in the tabernacles of the God of Israel was better than a thousand other days," and she too would have preferred to be the last in the holy place, rather than the first in the tents of Cedar.

CHAPTER VII.

MARRIAGE OF THE VIRGIN.

WHETHER Joachim on his death-bed had placed the Virgin under the special protection of the priesthood; whether the magistrates who took care of the orphans had themselves chosen guardians for her in the powerful family of Aaron, to which she belonged on her mother's side; whether the guardianship of children devoted to the service of the temple belonged of right to the Levites, it is certain that after the death of the authors of her days, Mary had guardians of the priestly race. It is probable, and the Arab traditions affirm it, that the cares of this guardianship were especially confided to the pious spouse of Elizabeth, to Zachary, who seemed designated by his high reputation for virtue, and his title of near relative,[1] for these duties of guardian-

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Some rabbins, however, maintain that it was necessary that the father or husband should annul them twenty-four hours after they came to know of them, in default of which they held good.—(Basnage, liv. vii. c. 19.)

(1) The Jews, together with Celsus, Porphyrius, and Faustus, have taken this relationship as their ground for maintaining that the Blessed Virgin was of the tribe of Levi. The Catholic doctors oppose this opinion: they maintain that Mary was of the tribe of Juda, and of the family of David. In fact, St. Matthew teaches us that Jesus Christ is called the Son of David, according to the flesh; but he can be the Son of David only through Mary, since he had no father among men. When it is asked how it can be that Mary, being of the tribe of Juda,

ship.[1] The eagerness which led the Blessed Virgin, two or three years later, to travel all through Judea, to offer her services and congratulations to the mother of St. John Baptist, and her prolonged stay in the mountains of Hebron, seem, in fact, to indicate a more intimate connexion than that of mere relationship; the roof which sheltered Mary during so long a visit could not have been, according to the etiquette so rigorously observed among the Hebrews, any other than a roof as sacred as her paternal dwelling.

Whoever the priests may have been who were honoured with the guardianship of the blessed daughter of the saintly Ann, they scrupulously acquitted themselves of the obligations imposed by their charge, and when the Virgin had attained her fifteenth year, they thought of giving her a spouse worthy of her. This proposal of marriage threw Mary into extreme affliction; that soul so elevated, so pure, so contemplative, had foreseen the gospel, and virginity appeared to her the most perfect, holy, and desirable of all conditions. An ancient author, quoted by St. Gregory of Nyssa, relates that she excused herself a long time, with great modesty, from consenting to the determination announced to her; and that she humbly entreated her family to consent to her leading a life in the temple, innocent, hidden, and free from all ties, except those of the Lord. Her request caused great surprise in those who disposed of her lot. What she implored as a favour was sterility,—that is to say, reproach,—a state solemnly accursed by the law of Moses;[2] it was the celibacy of an only heiress,[3]—

should be cousin to St. Elizabeth, who was of the tribe of Levi, St. Augustin answers that there is nothing impossible in a man of the tribe of Juda taking a wife of the tribe of Levi, and that the Blessed Virgin, sprung from this marriage, should be the relation of Elizabeth on her mother's side. It is proved, moreover, that the prohibition to contract an alliance with another tribe, regarded none but orphans who were heiresses of the property of their fathers.

(1) The Koran, where many Arab traditions are found relating to Mary, says formally that Zachary took her under his protection.—(Koran, c. 3.)

(2) Origen remarks that the law attached a curse to sterility; for it is written, "Let him who shall not leave of his race in Israel be accursed."

(3) Mary was an heiress, because it appears congruous that the descendants from David, whence the Messias was to spring, should end by a sole heiress, who,

that is to say, the total extinction of her father's name,—a thought considered almost impious among the Jews, who looked upon it as a signal misfortune for their name not to be perpetuated in Israel. As to the vow of virginity, with which she had desired to bind herself for life, she would not have dared to ground any claim upon that, because it might be annulled by a decision advised by her family. It is well known that the woman was, "everywhere, and at all times," treated as a minor, before the promulgation of that immortal code which gloriously raised her from the *malediction of servitude.*

The entreaties of the Virgin found therefore but little sympathy among the priests of Jehovah; they had not attained to such virtues: and to these men of penetration and science, the angelical and all holy soul of Mary was a book closed with seven seals of brass. Her thought, which was in advance of the age in which she lived, and opposed to the ancient prejudices of her nation, remained not understood, and all that she could allege, to save herself from embracing a state contrary to her dearest vows, availed her nothing. How indeed could she have convinced, since God himself was against her? Her marriage with a just man, who would bear witness to the purity of her life, free her from the importunities of the young Hebrews, who might have asked her hand even in the temple, as St. Augustin remarks,[1] and protect her and her divine Son in the hour of danger, entered into the secret views of Providence. It was the only means of concealing the mystery of the Incarnation from the malevolent investigations of a perverse world, who would have taken advantage of the prodigy to indulge in abominable conjectures, and would perhaps have carried their false zeal so far as to stone the mother of our Saviour, as they wanted afterwards to stone the sinful woman in the gospel;[2] for the Hebrews never reckoned mercy in the number of the virtues of their choice, and

becoming the mother of the eternal heir of the throne of David, should thereby crown and terminate his race.—(Oldhause.)

(1) St. Aug., De Sancta Virg., c. 4.

(2) St. John Chrysost., Serm. 3, in Matth.

God himself reproaches them, by the mouth of his prophets, with having *a heart as hard as adamant.*

To these reasons, powerful, but hidden in the impenetrable obscurity of the counsels of God, was added another reason derived from the source of antediluvian traditions and national pride, which, of itself, would have left but little chance of success to the timid opposition of the Virgin. Perpetual chastity, which Christians have made the queen of virtues, was little better than nonsense among the disciples of Moses, who lived for so many ages in the anxious expectation of the *King-Messias* (Melech Hamaschiak). A young flower of the stem of Jesse, a daughter of David, was not at liberty to decline the yoke of hymen; she owed a son to the ambitious piety of her family, who would not have renounced, for all the treasures of the Great King, the hope of one day reckoning in the number of their members the liberator of Israel. This hope—which had supported the Jews when the Chaldeans, *mounted on horses swifter than eagles*, had violently broken down the ramparts which encircled Sion, and transplanted her people to the borders of the Euphrates—had been newly tempered into a fierce desire of vengeance, since the Romans had held dominion in Asia. The Hebrews hoped soon to see the day when the eagles would fly before the emerald-coloured standard,[1] and when the motto of the Macchabees[2] would wave victorious above that of the senate of Rome. Never had the accomplishment of the oracles relating to the Messias appeared so near, and the moment was not auspicious for obtaining the favour which the chaste young daughter implored.

According to the Gospel of the Nativity of Mary, and the Proto-Gospel of St. James, the guardians of the Blessed Virgin, without regard to her repugnance and representations, assembled together her nearest relatives, all being of the race of David and the tribe of Juda, like herself,[3] in order to proceed to the

(1) The banner of Juda was green.—(Don Calmet.)

(2) This motto of the Macchabees contained these words: "Who is like to thee, O Eternal? *Mi camocha baehin, Jehovah?*"

(3) Every heiress to a property, and not daughters in general, as the Vulgate

choice of the spouse whom they forced upon her. Among those who might aspire to her hand, were found a number of young Israelites,—some handsome and brave, others owners of fertile fields, vineyards, flocks, and groves of olive-trees. The captains of Juda would have added to the portion of Mary part of the spoils and slaves taken in their battles; the Nabals of her tribe would have covered her with stuffs from India wrought with gold and purple of Tyre twice dyed; while the sons of commerce who trafficked in the emeralds of Egypt, the turquoises of Iran, and pearls of the Persian Gulf, would have laid at her feet chains of precious stones, valuable bracelets, ear-rings of value equal to the ransom of a prince—in fine, all the magnificent and brilliant insignia of the servitude of the weaker sex. But these illustrious parties were weighed in the balance and found light. Disdaining the advantages of youth, beauty, high rank, fortune, and the glory of arms, the priests who were guardians of the Blessed Virgin, and the ancients of her house, fixed their choice upon a man advanced in age,[1] a decayed patrician, whose fortune had been absorbed by the political revolutions and religious wars of Judea, as a drop of rain is swallowed up in the sea, leaving him only his tools and his arms for labour; this man of low condition, though of great family, who was a widower,[2] according to the

says, was bound to marry a man of her own family and tribe, and not her nearest relation, as Montesquieu has said, in order that inheritances might not be transferred from one tribe to another.

(1) The Proto-Gospel of St. James, c. 2, and the Gospel of the Nativity of Mary, c. 8, books of which the contents have been approved, for the most part, even by the fathers of the Church, merely say that he was already old. St. Epiphanius gives Joseph eighty years at the time of his marriage; F. Pezron, fifty; and the Histoire divine de la Vierge, of Mary d'Agrada, thirty-three. The supposition of St. Epiphanius does not bear examination; it is, moreover, solemnly refuted by the law of the Hebrews, which forbids the alliance of a young woman with an old man, and classes it with things the most disgraceful.—(Basn., liv. vii. c. 21, Hist. des Inst. de Moïse.) Neither the high priests nor Joseph would have been willing to do a thing condemned by the law. The age attributed by Mary d'Agrada to St. Joseph does not agree with the opinion of the fathers: there remains that of F. Pezron, which appears the most probable.

(2) Several fathers have thought that St. Joseph was a widower when he was espoused to the Blessed Virgin. The Proto-Gospel of St. James, and the

Proto-Gospel of St. James, and a bachelor according to St. Jerom, whose opinion has prevailed in the Church, was Joseph, the carpenter of Nazareth.

When we reflect on the rare beauty of Mary, the education which she had received in the temple, the great alliances of her family, her position as a heiress, which made her, among the Jews,—who portioned their wives, and received hardly anything from them,[1]—a desirable, and even brilliant match, we might well be astonished at this family decision, if the fathers had not assured us that Joseph was chosen by lot, and by the express manifestation of the divine will.[2] An ancient tradition, recorded in the Proto-Gospel of St. James, and mentioned by St. Jerom, relates that the candidates, after having prayed to HIM *who presides over the lots*, deposited over-night in the temple each one his rod of almond-tree; and that the next day the dry and dead branch of Joseph, the son of Jacob, the son of Mathan, was found green and in blossom, like that which had before confirmed the priesthood to the sons of Aaron. The history of Mount Carmel testifies that at the sight of this prodigy, which destroyed his hopes, a young patrician, belonging to one of the most powerful families of Judea, and the possessor of a great fortune, broke his rod with every sign of despair, and ran to shut himself up in one of the caves of Carmel with the disciples of Elias.[3]

Gospel of the Nativity of the Virgin, assure us that he was a widower; St. Epiphanius says that he had four sons and two daughters; St. Hippolytus of Thebes calls his first wife Salome; Origen, Eusebius, St. Ambrose, and many other fathers, have adopted the same opinion. Nevertheless, this opinion is the least followed, and it is commonly believed that St. Joseph had lived in virginity. This is the opinion of St. Jerom, who expressly says, writing against Helvidius: "We do not anywhere read that he had any other wife than Mary: *aliam eum uxorem habuisse non scribitur.*" St. Augustin leaves the question undecided; but St. Peter Damian affirms that the whole Church believes that St. Joseph, who passed for the father of our Saviour, was a virgin like Mary.

(1) At the time of contracting marriage, the wife received from her relations only things necessary for her attire. It was the husband who furnished the dowry.—(Salvador, Institutions de Moïse, t. ii. c. 1.)

(2) Evangel. de Nativ. Mar., c. 7; Protev. Jac., c. 8; Hier. in Dam., lib. iv. c. 5; Greg. Naz., hom. de S. Nat.; Niceph., lib. ii. c. 7.

(3) This young pretender to the Virgin, who is said to have been named

When the choice of the guardians was determined, it was announced to Mary, and this admirable young woman, accustomed to elegant occupations, brought up in the midst of the perfumes, melodious strains, and fairy magnificence of the holy house, did not hesitate to devote herself to a life of obscurity, to low and common employments, and painful cares, with the humble artizan presented to her by her relations. A divine inspiration, it is said, had made known to her that this just man would be to her no more than a protector, a father, a guardian of her chastity;[1] what more did she desire? The Lord had heard her prayer; by leaving her faithful to the vow which she had made, he gave her, over and above, the merit of obedience.

The marriage proposed between Joseph and Mary must have caused some surprise at Nazareth and at Jerusalem; for there was but little correspondence in the age, fortune, and condition of the future pair. It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that this union, which appears so strangely incompatible, was considered in Jewish society—a society of simple and primitive habits—as any flagrant, ill-sorted alliance. Without holding any distinguished rank in the state, the profession of an artizan was neither abject nor degrading in Israel.[2] We see in the genealogy of the tribe of Juda one family of workers in fine linen, and another of potters, whose memory is in honour; and the Scripture has handed down to posterity the names of Beseleel and Hiram. We know that St. Paul, brought up to the study of the law, the famous Pharisee doctor Hillel, and after them a great number of doctors, who, in the emphatic language of the rabbins, " sowed

Agabus, became afterwards celebrated for his sanctity, and a Christian.—(See Hist. du Carmel, c. 12.)

(1) Vie de la Sainte Vierge, by Descoutures, p. 49; Vie de Jesus Christ, by F. Valverde, t. i. p. 71.

(2) Artizans are still held in distinguished estimation in Judea. " In Palestine and in Syria," says Burckhardt, " the companies of artizans are almost as much respected as they were in the middle ages in France and Germany. A master artizan is quite on a level there, in rank and consideration, with a merchant of the second class; he may take a wife of the respectable families of the city, and has generally more influence in his locality than a merchant whose fortune is three times as great as his own."—(Burckh., Voyage en Arabie, t ii. p. 139.)

light amidst the holy nation," applied themselves to mechanic arts of a kind the least brilliant, and were not ashamed. Nay, more: every Israelite was an artizan; for every father of a family, whatever might have been his social position, was bound to make his son learn a trade, *unless*, said the law, *he wished to make a robber of him.*[1]

The Jews, whose patrimony was locked up in the hands of foreigners, had no alternative, while waiting for the grand epoch which was to re-establish their fortunes, but to expatriate themselves, or to live in a poor way by the labour of their hands, in the bosom of their native mountains. Those who were led by the love of their country to adopt this latter expedient did not act in any way contrary to their dignity, and remained well fitted for any sort of employment. Israel had no castes, like Egypt and India; all its pride arose from its religious belief and its descent from the patriarchs. "To be descended from Abraham according to the flesh," says the eagle of Meaux, "was a distinction which naturally raised them above all others." In fact, the lowest of the Hebrews considered himself a prince in comparison with strangers.[2]

Still there were among the Jews, as among the Arabs, some tribes more illustrious and certain houses more noble than others; the tribe of Juda, which bore the national standard at the head of the *thousands* of Israel in the day of battle, and from which the sceptre was not to depart till the coming of the Messias, had always had the pre-eminence; and the family of David was the first and most honoured among the families of Juda. Now Joseph, though poor, was of the race of David; the blood of twenty kings flowed in his veins, and it was Zorobabel, one of his

(1) Every man who does not give his children a profession, says the school of the Pharisees, prepares them for an evil life. "Be not a burthen to any one . . . . never say, I am a man of a quality, this employment is not suitable for me. Rabbi Johanan had learnt the trade of a skinner; Nahum that of a copyist of books; another Johanan made sandals; and Rabbi Juda knew the trade of a baker."—(Talmud, Tract. Kidonschim. Pessarh, Aboth; Soto.)

(2) In losing their nationality, the Jews did not lose this opinion, which they still maintain.

ancestors, who brought back the people of God from the land of exile. From that time the glory of his house had gradually become obscured; his family had become confounded with the people, like those of Moses and Samuel; but his illustrious origin was known: in our days, the lowest of the Abassides, who vegetate in the heart of the Hedsjaz, are no less respected as the descendants of Aaron-el-Raschid, and no Arab family would disdain to contract an alliance with them.

The holy daughter of Joachim did not then lower herself as much as might be supposed by marrying the CARPENTER. But if we take a higher view of this union, which at first seems so ill-assorted, we shall discover that it was in reality a noble alliance. God did not give as a spouse to the Virgin after his own heart, a man whose whole merit consisted in his fields, his vineyards, his sicles of gold,—things which often change masters, and are no more inherent in the rich man than the garments which he puts off at night: he gave her a just man,—the most perfect of his works. The Lord is not taken with the vain baubles which dazzle the vulgar; in his eyes all ranks are equal among poor creatures, who creep about the dust for a moment, to become in a short time the food of worms. "Man judges by those things that appear," says the Scripture, "but the Lord regardeth the heart." If God chose the humble Joseph for the spouse of the Queen of angels, for the adoptive father of the Messias, it was because he possessed treasures of grace and sanctity, enough to excite the envy of the celestial intelligences; it was because his virtues had made him the first of his nation, and because he was placed much higher than Cæsar in the book of life, those heraldic annals of eternity. The Virgin was not confided to the most powerful, but to the most worthy; thus the ark, which the princes and valiant men of Israel did not dare to approach, for fear of being struck dead, drew down the benedictions of heaven upon the house of a simple Levite, under whose poor roof it was sheltered.

The espousals of Mary were celebrated with all the simplicity of ancient times. Joseph, in presence of the guardians and a few

witnesses, presented her with a piece of silver, the value of which is not known,[1] saying to her, "If thou consentest to be my bride, accept this pledge." Mary, by accepting this gift, was solemnly engaged, and a sentence of divorce alone could from that day restore her liberty. The scribes drew up the contract; it was short, and but little interlarded with technical terms.[2] The husband promised to honour his wife, to provide for her support, her food, her clothing, according to the custom of Hebrew husbands, and settled upon her a dowry of two hundred zuses (fifty crowns), a portion alike for the daughter of a prince as for the daughter of the people, but to which they were free to add anything in proportion to their fortune. After having secured this dowry upon all that he possessed, and even upon his mantle, which the law nevertheless did not allow him to recover till after her death,[3] Joseph signed the contract, to which Mary also added her signature. A short benediction to the praise of God terminated this ceremony, which must precede that of marriage by several months.

The nuptials of the Blessed Virgin were celebrated at Jerusalem, and the persons of the highest quality of her family made it a duty to appear at it with that splendour which is peculiar to the East, and which travellers from Europe never mention without admiration and astonishment, even the common people dis-

(1) Hillel and Schammay disputed warmly about the value of this piece of money at espousals, mentioned in the Talmud, with ut being able to come to an agreement.—(Basn., liv. vii. c. 21.)

(2) The following is the literal form of Hebrew marriage-contracts, which has come down from the most remote times, and which Joseph and Mary must have used:—"In the year .... the .... day of the month .... Benjamin, son of .... said to Rachel, daughter of ...., 'Become my wife, under the law of Moses and of Israel. I promise to honour thee, to provide for thy support, thy food, thy clothing, according to the custom of Hebrew husbands, who honour their wives and support them as it is befitting. I give thee at once .... (the sum adjudged by the law), and promise thee, besides nourishment, clothes, and whatever shall be necessary for thee, conjugal friendship, a thing common to all the nations of the world.' Rachel consented to become the wife of Benjamin, who, of his full consent, to form a dowry in proportion to his own fortune, adds to the portion above-named the sum of ...."—(Institut. de Moïse.)

(3) Basn., liv. vii. c. 21.

playing on these occasions a degree of luxury absolutely unheard of.[1] Not to invite all their relations on so solemn an occasion would have been refusing to follow the ancient customs of their forefathers,—a thing impossible to suppose in that traditionary nation, which was as immutable in its customs as in its religious pra tices, as was said in all truth by the Jew Philo to the Emperor Caius; it would have been wanting, moreover, in all the proprieties of Hebrew society, and the presence of Mary at the marriage of Cana proves, on the contrary, that she conformed to them.

One fine day in winter,[2] at the time when the new moon rose slowly behind the mountains,[3] a long procession of women richly adorned was seen proceeding towards the habitation of Mary; the torches of resinous fir, borne by a number of slaves, made brilliant their golden girdles, their pearl network, the diadems of precious stones which they wore on their foreheads, and the diamonds of their Persian tiaras.[4] These daughters of Sion had kept up the use of paint, which was known as early as the time of Jezabel; their eyebrows and eyelashes were dyed black, and the tips of their fingers were red, like the berry of the eglantine.[5] Introduced into the interior apartment, where the young and holy

(1) "In Europe we have no idea of the luxurious display made on similar occasions in the East," says F. de Geramb, in his Pélerinage à Jerusalem; "the nuptial dresses of almost all wives is of red velvet embroidered with gold; they add to it decorations of diamonds, fine pearls, &c." M. de Lamartine was equally astonished at the splendid costumes, and the profusion of precious stones displayed by the women of Syria at the weddings of their fellow countrywomen.

(2) In the middle of the sixteenth century, the Church permitted this feast to be kept; it is celebrated on the 22nd of January, the day on which it is said that the marriage of Mary and Joseph was celebrated. The city of Arras keeps this feast on the 23rd of January, and some churches in Flanders, on the 24th of the same month.

(3) All days were not chosen alike for celebrating the marriages of the Israelites; the time of the new moon was usually fixed upon, and a Wednesday in preference to the other days of the week.—(Basn., liv. vii. c. 21.)

(4) Isaias, c. iii.

(5) Throughout the East, the women stain the tips of their fingers with alkanna, *lausonia inermis* (Linn.) This plant is very plentiful in the island of Cyprus.

betrothed one was in company with certain pious matrons, who were her relations, they blessed God, who gave her a protector in the person of a spouse, and complimented her upon her marriage, in the joy of which they came to participate.

Belonging to Jewish society, where all the details of the dress of young brides was a biblical reminiscence with which it was not lawful to dispense, Mary was obliged to submit for a short time to the requirements of oriental luxury, though this luxury had no charms for her. Gold, pearls, rich tissue, are not in themselves things to be condemned; it is the thoughts of pride and vanity to which they give rise, in weak heads and light minds, which are bad. Beneath garments heavy with embroidery and adorned with precious stones, Queen Bathildes was more humble than the women clad in coarse cloth with whom she lived in seclusion after her glorious regency; the chroniclers of the time have informed us of this with candour and simplicity.

Therefore, avoiding any show of negligence in her dress, which would have been taken very ill, since custom required of the married couple, as well as of their guests, a dress suitable to the occasion—as the gospel of the wedding garment would inform us, even if all the East, both ancient and modern, did not concur in the same—the young descendant of the kings of Juda was obliged to wear, on this occasion, rich and suitable costume, and authentic relics prove in fact that so it was.[1]

Her robe, which was preserved as a precious treasure in Palestine, whence it was sent to Constantinople, about the year 461, as Nicephorus informs us, was of a texture precious from its design and ornaments. The ground was of the colour of nankeen, with flowers blue, white, violet, and gold: it is now the sacred relic of Chartres.[2]

(1) There are in existence two tunics of the Blessed Virgin, the material of which is very precious. Chardin saw one in Mingrelia covered with flowers embroidered with the needle on a nankeen ground. This tunic is eight Roman palms long by four wide; the neck is narrow, the sleeves a palm long; it is kept in the Church of Copis.

(2) This tunic was given by Charles the Bald to the Church of Chartres, in 877: numerous miracles are attributed to it.

In memory of the ancient times and patriarchal manners of her fathers, she wore, like Rebecca, ear-rings and bracelets of gold, the modest and indispensable present which Joseph was to send a few days before the ceremony,[1] and to which the wealthy Hebrews added necklaces of pearls and magnificent sets of diamonds. Instead of an indented crown of gold,[2] which was worn by the brides of the opulent classes, there was placed upon the light hair and tresses[3] of Mary a simple garland of myrtle; in the spring time roses would have been added to it;[4] her nuptial veil covered her from head to foot, and floated around her like a cloud.[5]

A canopy of precious materials awaited the future spouse outside; four young Israelites bore it.[6] Mary had to place herself under it between two matrons, one of whom, who stood on her right, represented her mother; the other was perhaps that Mary

(1) The Christians of Damascus have kept up this custom. Some days before the nuptial festival, the bridegroom sends to his bride a pair of bracelets of gold, or set with diamonds, according to the fortune of the future spouse, a piece of stuff embroidered with gold, and 160 piastres for the expenses of the bath and the nuptial feast.—(Corresp. d'Orient, lettre 147.)

(2) The crown of the bride was usually of gold, and made in the shape of a tower, like that of Cybele; this custom was abolished during the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, but they kept up the crowns of myrtle and roses.—(Basn., liv. vi. c. 21.)

(3) Among the Hebrews, not even the dress of the women was independent of the empire of tradition. "The female hair-dressers were called in to dress the hair of young married women, because, said the rabbins, Jehovah himself curled the hair of Eve, when he united her to Adam in Paradise."—(Basn., liv. vii. c. 21, p. 393.)

(4) Crowns of myrtle and roses were worn by the young betrothed women of the common people.—(Basn., liv. vii. c. 21; Misnah. Tit. Sotah, c. 9, sect. 14.)

(5) These nuptial veils, embroidered with gold and silver, are still in use in Syria.

(6) The regulation of this nuptial pomp, which comes down from the earliest times, is still found in Egypt. Niebuhr thus describes an Egyptian marriage:—"The bride, covered from head to foot, walks between two women who conduct her beneath a canopy borne by four men. Several slaves go before, some of whom play on the tambourine, others carry fly-flappers, others sprinkle her with scented waters. She is followed by a number of women, and by musicians riding upon asses. The procession takes place in the night; some slaves carry torches."—(Niebuhr, Voyage en Arabie, t. i.)

of Cleophas, whom some others have made the elder daughter of St. Anne, but who was only sister-in-law of the Blessed Virgin.[1] After them walked, to the sound of timbrels, flutes, and harps, playing in unison,[2] airs of grave and simple melody, which, perhaps, were the same as those of the choirs of music of King David; the entire nuptial procession waving, in token of joy, branches of myrtle and palm.[3] The bridegroom, with his brow adorned with a singular crown, transparent as crystal, and peculiar to his people,[4] advanced in the midst of a crowd of friends, who sung an epithalamium in imitation of the Canticle of Canticles of Solomon, that magnificent and mysterious nuptial song, the sublime metaphors of which have a hidden and divine signification. They celebrated the beauty of the new bride, whose "looks were like young palm-branches, and stature graceful and upright, like the branches of the erac, teeth white as a flock of sheep which come up from the washing, eyes mild, like the eyes of doves which sit beside the plentiful streams; they said that the sweet odour of her good name was like the perfumes which exhaled from her garments; that she was the lily of young virgins, and the object of the praise of women." Then, passing on to the eulogy of the bridegroom, they extolled his form, "majestic and imposing as Libanus, the sweetness of his voice, the urbanity of his manners;" and they added, "that he was distinguished from the crowd of men, even as the cedar is distinguished among all trees." Then, coming to more general and elevated considera-

(1) According to M. Pignot, a conscientious historian who made numerous researches on this subject, this holy woman was the wife of Cleophas, the brother of St. Joseph, and consequently sister-in-law to the Blessed Virgin.—(See Recherches historiques sur la personne de Jésus Christ et celle de Marie, p. 249.)

(2) The music of the Orientals is of a very different kind from ours; it is grave and simple, without any studied modulation: all the instruments play in unison, unless one or other should take a fancy to perform a continued bass by repeating incessantly the same note.—(Niebuhr, t. i. p. 136.)

(3) See Fleury, Mœurs des Israelites.

(4) This crown, which contained, say the Jewish doctors, a mysterious lesson, was composed of salt and sulphur; the salt was transparent, like crystal, and they traced various figures upon it with sulphur.—(Codex, MS. apud Wagenseil in Mismam, Tit. Sotah, adult. de uxore suspect., c. 9, sect. 14.)

tions, they said that the spouse should be to his wife as "the nosegay of myrrh which she wears over her heart;" that she should pass through life leaning upon him, with no more care for other men than if she was passing through the desert; because "jealousy is as inflexible as death, and the lamps thereof are lamps of fire and flames." They added that tender affection was a thing so precious between married persons, that "the wealthiest man in the world, if he gave all his riches for it, ought still to consider that he had given nothing."

From time to time, the young men who closed the procession formed dances of the same kind as the sacred dance which was originally associated with religious festivals,[1] or they uttered, in token of rejoicing, those shrill and prolonged cries which are still in use among the Arabs,[2] and which a modern traveller, who lately went all over Syria, compares to those loud cries which the vine-dressers of the south of France utter from hill to hill during the vintage. All in the procession scattered among the poor, who loaded them with blessings, a quantity of small pieces of silver[3] bearing a figure, either of a vine-leaf, or of three ears of wheat, which were the emblem of Judea.[4] The women of Israel, in groups along the way that the wedding couple passed, strewed palm branches under their feet, and from time to time they stopped the bride to sprinkle essence of roses upon her attire.[5] Mary was to have also her own day of triumph in Jerusalem.

When they arrived at the house where the wedding was to be celebrated, the friends of the bridegroom and the companions of the bride cried out in chorus, "Blessed is he that cometh!"

(1) Dancing, which at first was intended to imitate the movements of the stars, was mixed up with all the religious festivals of antiquity: it was, no doubt, of antediluvian origin, and must even have preceded the invention of musical instruments.

(2) See Niebuhr, *loco citato*.

(3) Basn., liv. vii. c. 21.

(4) Some of these Jewish coins have been found of the time of the Machabees and of Herod; they do not bear the effigy of any prince, but only of ears of wheat and vine leaves.

(5) This custom was borrowed from Egypt, like many others.

Joseph, covered with his *taled*, and Mary with her veil, were seated under the canopy side by side; Mary took the right, because the psalmist has said, "Thy wife is on thy right hand,"[1] and turned towards the south.[2] The spouse placed a ring on the finger of his partner,[3] "Behold, thou art my wife, according to the rite of Moses and of Israel." He took off his taled and covered his wife with it, in imitation of what passed at the marriage of Ruth, who said to Booz, "Spread thy coverlet over thy servant."[4] A near relative poured wine into a cup, tasted it, and then presented it to the bridegroom and bride, blessing God for having created man and woman, and instituted marriage. While the married couple put the sacred nuptial cup to their lips, they sung to the God of Israel a canticle containing six benedictions. After this, Joseph poured out the rest of the wine as a sign of bounty, and handfuls of wheat as a symbol of abundance: then a young child broke the cup in pieces.[5]

The whole assembly surrounding the new married couple with torches, blessed the Lord, and went forward into the dining-room, where they proceeded—according to a very ancient Bishop of Brescia,[6] who derives this Hebrew tradition from the time of Jesus Christ—to nominate a king of the feast, taken from the priestly race, who was to preside over the viands and the wine, and to oblige the guests to behave with all that decorum required by religion and propriety. Joseph and Mary rose also; but, before they followed their company, there were exchanged between them some secret words in presence of heaven and the stars, which declare the glory of the Most High.[7] "Thou

(1) Ps. xlv. 10.
(2) Basn., liv. vii. c. 21.
(3) It is said that this ring is at Perosa, where it is carefully preserved.—(Basn., liv. vii. c. 2.)
(4) See Buxtorf.
(5) Basn., liv. vii. c. 21; Institut. de Moïse, liv. vii. c. 1, p. 336.
(6) Gaudent., Serm. 9, B. P., t. ii. p. 38.
(7) St. Thomas is of opinion that it was immediately after the celebration of their marriage that St. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin made a vow of virginity, by mutual consent.

shalt be as my mother," said the patriarch to the Blessed Virgin, "and I will respect thee even as the altar of Jehovah." From that moment they were no longer, in the eye of the religious law, any more than brother and sister in marriage, although their union might be fully maintained.[1]

The festivities, among which figured the religious ceremony of sacrifice, lasted seven days, as in the time of the patriarchs; the week of the nuptials being expired, Joseph and Mary, under the escort of a number of their relations, who formed around them a brilliant cavalcade, went again on their way to Galilee. The little caravan went forward to the sound of cymbals, and was not interrupted till near the fountain of Anathoth,[2] where those of Jerusalem took leave of the bride and bridegroom, with tears in their eyes, blessings in their mouths, and their hands laid solemnly upon their hearts. The Nazareans continued their journey; they crossed the mountains of Samaria, where the eagle from the height of his nest beheld them pass, indifferent to their presence. Sichem next presented itself to the travellers, with its evergreen groves, its streams of limpid water, and its majestic edifices rising above the foliage. They left behind them Garizim, with its red-tinted sides, where the ruins of the schismatical temple were observable, the disgraceful rival of the house of holiness, which John Hircanus delivered to the avenging flames,

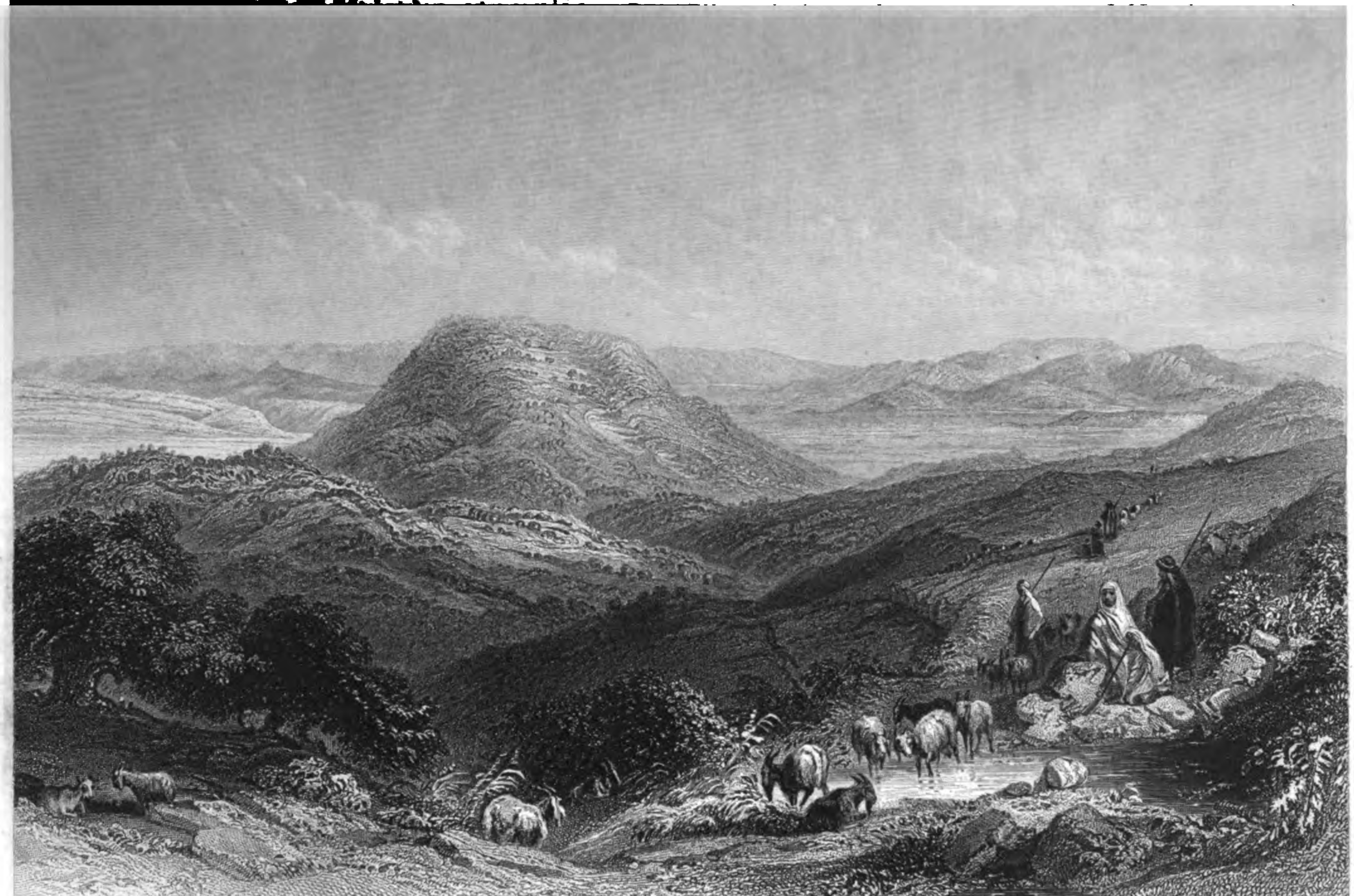
(1) This vow of continency in marriage, which has given occasion to so many impious sarcasms to the *philosophes* of the school of Voltaire, was not a thing unheard of among the Hebrews; only it was a vow dictated by passion and anger, while that of the two holy spouses was suggested by piety. If a husband said to his wife, "Thou art as my mother," it was no longer lawful for him to consider her but as such in marriage; and still more when he had introduced into his vow the altar of Jehovah, the temple, or the sacrifice. The wives sometimes did the same thing; and although these vows were not much approved, because they hardly ever came but at the end of fits of anger and curses, they were not less obliged religiously to fulfil them when they were made.—(Basn., liv. vii. c. 19, p. 352; Leo of Modena, Ceremon. et cont. des Juifs, c. 4.)

(2) All the relations escorted the bride on horseback to the house of her husband, when he did not live at too great a distance from the place of their feasting; this custom still continues among the Arabs. We have made the nuptial caravan separate at Anathoth, a small town five leagues from Jerusalem, because it is the first halting place.

and which was to be replaced later on by a church dedicated to Mary herself; then the high summits of Mount Hebal; then Sebaste, which reared its new palaces under the protection of Augustus, and which Herod delighted servilely to embellish, as the only altar where he could sacrifice to the genius of Rome.

Towards the middle of the second day's journey they distinguished Mount Thabor, whose verdant head was traced upon the pale silvery sky of Galilee; and beyond it the high tops of Libanus, which hid their pointed tops of stone, covered with eternal snows, in the clouds. From the woody slopes of Hermon, where the goats browsed upon the tender shoots of the shrubs, they descended into the delightful plain, which was displayed like an immense basket of flowers, between hills covered with green oaks, myrtles, plots of vineyards, and magnificent woods of olive-trees. Fields of barley, wheat, clover, and doura in full verdure, gently waving with the breeze, warmed by the approach of a spring more speedy and genial than that of our western regions. A pure and golden light favoured this fertile land, where a vigorous vegetation was unfolding itself, and blue waters, which the summer would soon dry up, ran in silvery ribands in this new Eden. Here and there opulent villages appeared beneath high colonnades of palm-trees, and then, at different distances, on the rugged crest of a rock, a solitary fortress of soldiers, still national and entrusted with a mission entirely protective, measured their Damascus sabres only with nocturnal depredators, or the Arabs of the desert. This valley, with its charming freshness, and enclosed within a dark border of high mountains, was the valley of Esdrelon, at the extremity of which appeared a little city, seated with picturesque effect on the back of a hill, and which shone like a flower amidst the neighbouring hamlets: this smiling and beautiful town was Nazareth, the native town of the Virgin, the cradle of Christ![1]

(1) The *philosophes* of the last century studiously laboured to depreciate Palestine; the impression which they have given of it still remains, and the state of poverty and depopulation of that country, which hardly breathes beneath the sabre of the Mussulmans, has often made them appear right in the eyes of



W. H. Bartlett. J. Cousen.

Mount Thabor.

Doubtless, Mary could not behold again without emotion that city where she had first opened her eyes to the light. She had left it when quite a child for the splendid walls of the temple; she returned to it beautiful, young, accomplished, and a virgin on her return even as on her departure.

The travellers stopped at the house of St. Ann, an ancient and mysterious dwelling, partly hollowed out of the rock, like the prophetic grottoes of ancient times,[1] and which was shortly to

superficial readers. Yet it is certain that with the exception of the environs of Jerusalem, the sterility of which has never been denied, the promised land of Moses is still found in that country, and especially in the part which formerly belonged to the Canaanites. We will give two descriptions of Galilee, written at the distance of eighteen centuries between them, in proof of this assertion. "Galilee," says Flavius Josephus, "is divided into upper and lower, both very fertile; the soil is at once rich and light, abounding in pasturages, fitted for all sorts of produce, and covered with trees of all kinds; there are to be seen particularly large plantations of vines and olive-trees. It is watered by torrents, which fall from the mountains, by a great number of springs and rivulets, which afford a constant supply of water, and make up for that of the torrents, when the heats of summer dry them up. The goodness of the land is such, that it invites men to labour who are the least disposed to it. Thus every part is cultivated, and no tract of land is seen unproductive. The inhabitants are robust and warlike, the towns numerous, and so populous that the smallest can reckon as many as fifteen thousand souls."—(Joseph., de Bello, lib. ii. c. 2.) "If one desired to give an idea of the aspect of Galilee," says a modern traveller in his turn, "France would not serve to compare it with, but *l'Agro Romano;* round about Nazareth, as in the environs of Rome, there is everywhere the same brightness, the same formation of the soil. Nature is there sublime, like the gospel. Galilee is an abridged picture of the Holy Land, and when it has been seen under its day and night aspects, we understand what it was in the time of Jesus Christ. For an artist, Galilee is an Eden; nothing is wanting: neither the accidental advantages of the land of Judea, nor the bright solitudes of Palestine, nor the green fecundity of Samaria. Garizim and the Mount of Olives are not more sublime than Hermon and Thabor, nor are the blue shores of Ascalon more solemn than the odoriferous borders of the Lake of Tiberias, where the air vanishes beneath the light. The soil of Galilee presents to us everywhere history and miracles, traces of heroes and the footsteps of a God; and we feel as we contemplate Galilee from the heights of Thabor, that it was the country which the God-man inhabited, so much are religious recollections, the wonders of earth and heaven, commingled there interminably."—(Corresp. d'Orient, t. v.)

(1) "There are still found at Nazareth," says F. de Geramb, "some houses like that of St. Joseph, that is to say, small, low, and communicating with a cave hollowed out of the side of a mountain."

become more holy than the temple of Jerusalem, the very house of Jehovah. The women of Nazareth greeted with blessings the arrival of the young bride, who advanced modestly, and veiled like the Rebecca of Isaac; and Mary, in the midst of the congratulations of those who had witnessed her birth, entered this peaceful paternal habitation, which seemed still perfumed with the sweet odour of the virtues of Ann and Joachim.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ANNUNCIATION.

It is easy to imagine the tranquil and blessed life which the married couple led during the first months of their chaste union; the peace of God reigned in their humble dwelling, and work divided their time with prayer, which made it less laborious by sanctifying it. After an ancient custom, which still subsists among the Arabs and in a great part of the East, Joseph exercised his trade in a different place from that where Mary lived.[1] His workshop, where Jesus himself worked, was a low room of ten or twelve feet square: a stone seat outside offered rest to the passer-by, or the traveller, which was protected from the burning rays of the sun by a kind of awning of twisted palm-leaves.[2] There it was that the laborious workman formed his ploughs, his yokes, and rustic carts. Sometimes he built under his own inspection the huts of the valley; sometimes his arm, yet strong,

(1) This house of St. Joseph is a hundred and thirty or a hundred and forty paces from that of St. Ann. The place is still pointed out under the name of the *workshop of Joseph*. This shop had been transformed into a large church; the Turks have destroyed one part of it; but there remains a chapel where the holy sacrifice of the mass is daily offered.—(Pélerinage à Jérusalem, par le P. de Geramb.)

(2) These shops are still the same all over the Levant.—(See Burckhardt, Voyage en Arabie, t. i.)

cut down the tall sycamores and black turpentine-trees of Mount Carmel.[1] The pay which he received for so much fatigue was but small, and this little he shared with the poor.

His gentle and holy companion was not idle on her side; gifted with a mind enlightened, judicious, and wise, without regret for the past, without illusions for the future, viewing the world such as it is, and her own position in its true light, she piously conformed herself to it, and desired to fulfil its sacred obligations with religious exactitude. From the moment that she took possession of the house of her mother, she put on poverty as a garment of honour sent her from God, and became what it behoved her to be in the obscure condition to which Providence had reduced her—a young and simple daughter of the people. All the brilliant and fancy works belonging to the elegancies of life were at once laid aside, and replaced by the fatiguing cares and monotonous occupations of a poor household, where the mistress of the house has neither slaves nor servants. The delicate hands of Mary, accustomed to handle silken tissues, platted with leaves of the date-palm, or rushes pulled from the banks of the Jordan, the matting which covered the rough floor of her dwelling; her spindle was covered with coarse flax; she had to grind the grains of wheat, barley, and doura,[2] the coarse

(1) St. Justin, martyr (Dialog. cum Tryphone), records that Jesus Christ helped his adopted father in making yokes and ploughs. St. Ambrose (in Luc., lib. iii. 2) assures us that St. Joseph worked at felling and cutting out trees, at building houses, and other such work.

(2) The first mills that were invented were hand-mills. In Egypt, Arabia, Palestine, and even in Greece, they were turned by women. There is still shown at Mecca, in a fine house, which is believed to have been that of Khadidje, a hollow place, where it is said that Fatima, surnamed "the Brilliant," daughter of Mahomet, and wife of Ali, turned her own hand-mill when she was grown up.—(See Burckhardt, Voyage en Arabie.) The wives of the Arab sheiks have still this painful occupation allotted to them. Under the reign of the sons of Clovis, St. Radegundes, Queen of France, ground herself, *in imitation of the Blessed Virgin*, all the corn that she consumed during Lent.—(Le Grand d'Aussy, Hist. privée des Français.) The invention of water-mills is attributed to Mithridates. It is certain that they were in existence in his time. Among other proofs, is cited that fine epigram of Antipater of Thessalonica, of which the following is a translation:—"You women who have been hitherto employed in grinding our

and yellow flour of which she kneaded into round and thin cakes. Covered with her white veil, with an antique urn upon her head,[1] she went to draw water at a fountain at a little distance,[2] like the wives of the patriarchs, or to wash her blue robes in the running water of the brooks, like the princesses of Homer.

Jesus Christ, witness of the laborious habits of this valiant woman, sometimes alludes to them in his parables; and these simple occupations of Mary are preserved in the gospel narrative, like a sea-weed in amber. We see, in fact, the industrious woman putting leaven into three measures of meal,[3] carefully sweeping her floor to recover something lost,[4] and economically mending an old garment.[5] When Jesus seeks a comparison, to recommend purity of heart, he draws it from the remembrance of her who carefully cleans "both the inside and outside of the cup;"[6] and we suspect that his thought is of Mary when he praises the offering of the widow "who gives not of her abundance, but of her indigence." Thus the poet of Chios represents to us Justice under the features of his mother, a poor woman of the people, weighing exactly the wool which she is going to spin for the

corn, let your arms rest henceforth, and sleep without care; the birds will no longer proclaim with their songs the break of day for you. Ceres has commanded the Naiads to do your work: they obey, and quickly turn a wheel which rapidly moves by itself the heavy millstones." The Romans did not bring water-mills to perfection till Constantine had abolished slavery.

(1) These urns are enormous earthen vessels, of a height out of all proportion. The women of Nazareth carry them on their heads, and beneath so great a weight, sometimes even with an infant in their arms, they walk with an activity quite astonishing.—(F. de Geramb, t. ii. p. 239.)

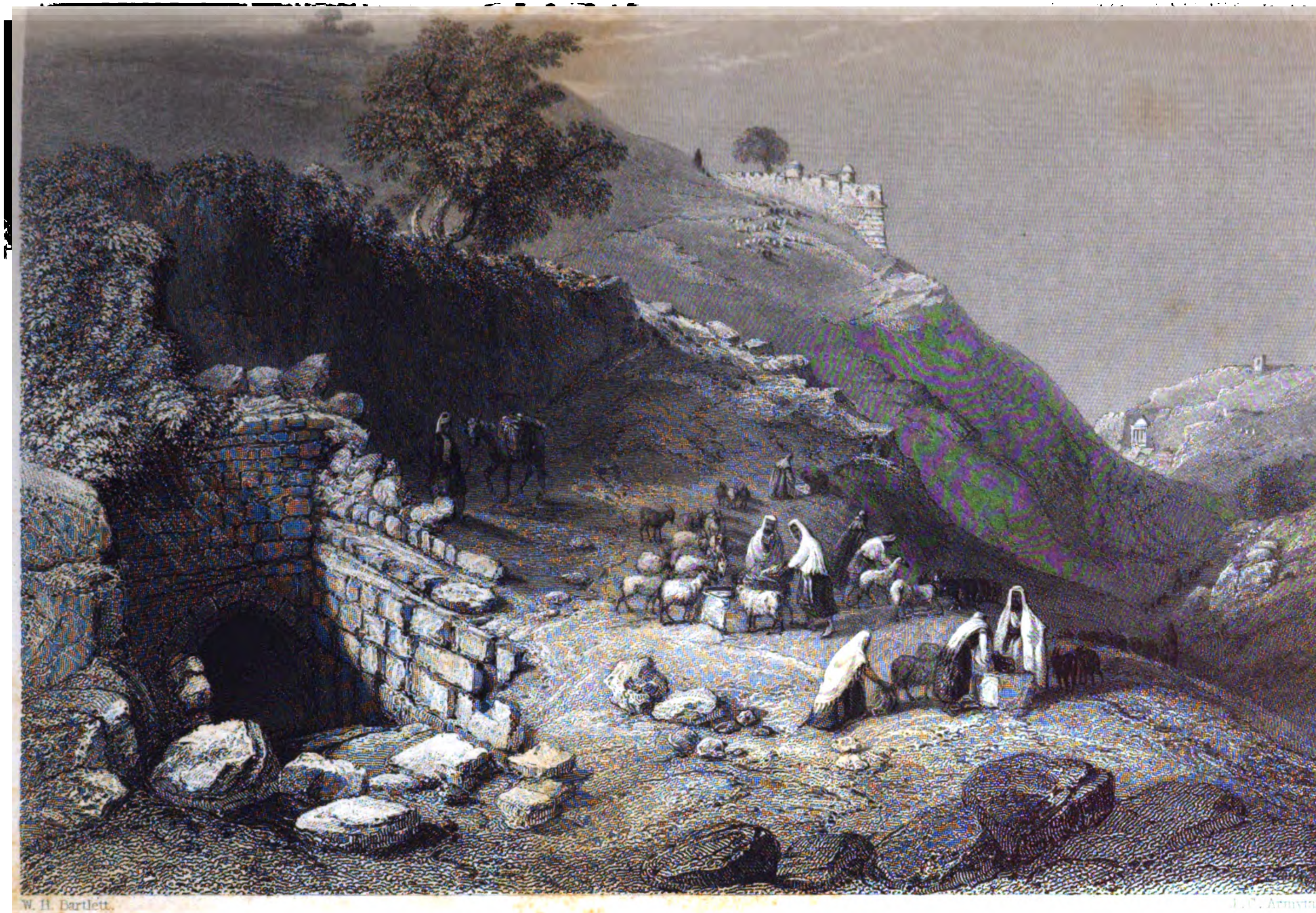
(2) This fountain is called in the country *the fountain of Mary*. Tradition relates that the divine Mother of Jesus went habitually to draw the water which she required, and to be convinced that it must have been so, it would suffice to consider that water is extremely rare at Nazareth. The road which leads to this fountain, where the pious mother of Constantine had had fine basins and reservoirs constructed, is bordered with nopals and fruit-trees.—(F. de Geramb, *loco citato*.)

(3) St. Luke xiii. 21, and St. Matt. xiii. 34.

(4) Ibid., v. 36.

(5) Ibid., xv. 8.

(6) St. Luke xi. 39, and St. Matt. xxv. 25.



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support of herself and her son, and remaining upright and just towards the rich, in the midst of deep misery.

At the approach of night,[1] when the birds seek a shelter beneath the foliage, Mary placed upon a neat polished table, the work of Joseph's hands, little loaves of barley and doura, savoury dates, butter, and cheese, dry fruits and herbs, which composed the frugal banquet of the descendant of the princes of Israel. These dishes, simply prepared, were the chief food of the ancient Hebrews,—a sober race, who knew how to be contented with bread and water when necessity required it.[2] As to the Virgin, she lived on so little that ancient authors, fond of the marvellous, believed that she was fed by angels.

When Joseph, fatigued with the labours of the day, returned at sunset to his little low apartment, he found his young companion hastening to offer him, by turns, warm water, which she had heated to wash his feet, and cold clear water from the fountain, in a vessel pure from all unclean contact,[3] for the ablutions before the repast. That grave and simple man, with his fine patriarchal countenance, where every passion was silent; that angelical young female all eager to serve him with the solicitude of a dear daughter, formed a group worthy of the golden age.[4]

Meantime, the hour marked out by the Eternal in his divine counsels for the Incarnation of his CHRIST had arrived. The angel Gabriel, one of the four[5] who are always before the face of

(1) In Israel, those who kept regular hours eat after their work, and pretty late.—(Fleury, Mœurs des Israelites.) The principal meal of Joseph and Mary was about six o'clock in the evening.

(2) Fleury, Mœurs des Israel., p. 61.

(3) There was among the Jews a multitude of precautions to be taken for the purity of the vessels in which they drew water, and in which they prepared their food; not only did they take care that they had not belonged to strangers, but they carried their scruples much farther, for a thousand circumstances rendered them unclean.—(Misnah., Ordo Puritatum.)

(4) An ancient author makes the Virgin say, "Non dedignabar parare et ministrare quæ erant necessaria Joseph;" and this is in perfect conformity with the customs still existing.

(5) "There are four angels who are hardly ever seen upon earth," say the

the Lord, received a mysterious mission, which removed him, for a short time, from the kingdom of heaven. Clothed in one of those beautiful coverings of dense air, with which the pure spirits are surrounded when they would be perceptible to the gross senses of the children of men,[1] the angel left behind him the golden palaces and the emerald walls of the heavenly Jerusalem, the gates of which are twelve pearls,[2] and spread his vast white wings,[3] with his brow all radiant with benignant joy; for the holy angels are as glad at the happiness of men as the bad angels are at their ruin and sufferings.

After traversing the immeasurable deserts of the sky, of which the stars are the oasis, the angel who had foretold to Daniel the coming of the Messias, and who came to act for the accomplishment of that grand promise of God, directed his course, with the rapidity of thought, towards our little planet, which his piercing eye discovered at an immense distance, in the state of a nebulous star, which next shone with a feeble milky light; and which finally took the rotundity and tranquil light of the moon, whose phases it has.

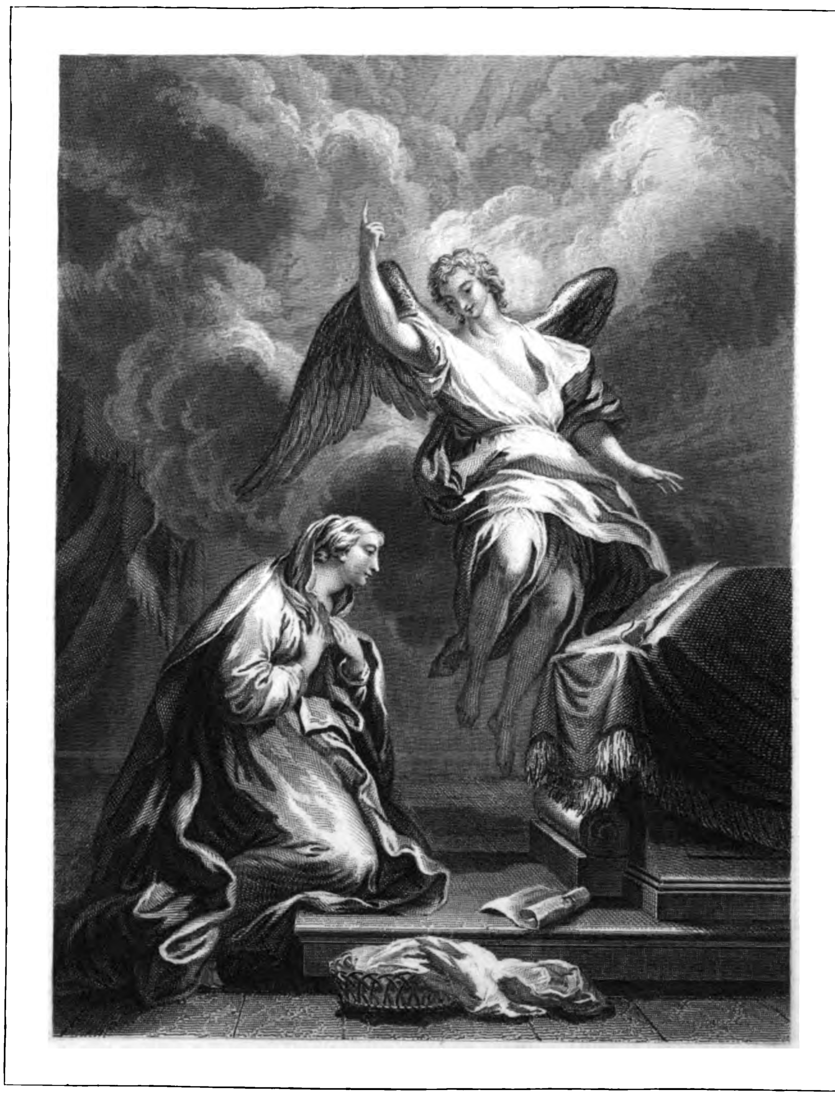
As he approached this little globe,—which man has proudly divided into zones and hemispheres, and in which he bestirs himself, with insane ardour, to pick up a few bits of gold, which he makes his god,—the angel began to distinguish expanses of blue and shining water, surmounted with dark points like small submarine rocks: these were our oceans and our high mountains. The towns were not yet visible, nor men; they are so small! But at last, the earth, which had at first presented itself under a microscopic form, was gradually enlarged into vast countries

rabbins, "because they are always round about the throne of God: these angels are, Michael, who is on the right; Gabriel, who is on the left; Uriel, who is before God, and Raphael, who is behind him."

(1) St. Thomas of Aquin, Quæst. Univ. de creat. Spirit., Art. 6.

(2) Apocal., c. xxi. v. 21.

(3) The Jews represent the angels with wings, as do the Christians. The Koran gives a hundred and forty pairs of wings to the angel Gabriel, and says that he took but one hour to come from heaven upon earth.—(Legend of Mahomet.)



THE ANNUNCIATION.

covered with kingdoms, divided by deserts, and planted with forests. Arrived directly over Palestine, the angel from on high directed his look, as a benediction, down upon the beautiful town of Nazareth, and descending softly from the clouds like the falling stars, he came down gracefully, like a fine swan, on his flight folding his wings, upon the holy and poor house of Joseph, that carpenter of Galilee, who had kings for his ancestors.

The sun was declining towards the lofty promontory of Carmel, and would soon set in the horizon of the sea of Syria, when the angel presented himself in the modest oratory of the Blessed Virgin.[1] As a faithful observer of the religious customs of her people, Mary, with her head turned in the direction of the temple,[2] was then making her evening prayer to the God of Jacob.[3] "Hail, full of grace," said the celestial envoy, bowing his radiant head; "the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women."

Mary felt an involuntary trembling at this marvellous apparition. Perhaps, like Moses, she feared that she should see God, and die; perhaps, as St. Ambrose thought, her virginal purity was alarmed at the sight of this son of heaven, who entered, like the rays of light, into that solitary cell where no man penetrated; perhaps it was the respectful attitude and the magnificent eulogy of the angel which disconcerted her humility. Whatever may have been the cause, the Evangelist relates that she was troubled at his saying, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be, seeking, but in vain, to understand the object of

(1) It is commonly thought that the visit of the angel to the Blessed Virgin took place towards the evening.

(2) The people of the East turn to a certain point in the heavens when they pray; it is what they call the *Kebla*. The Jews turn towards the temple of Jerusalem, the Mahometans towards Mecca, the Sabeans towards the south, and the Ghebers towards the rising sun.

(3) The Jews prayed three times in the day: in the morning, at sunrise; in the afternoon, at three o'clock, when they offered sacrifice; and in the evening, at sunset. According to the rabbins, Abraham established morning prayer; Isaac, that of the afternoon; and Jacob, that of the evening.—(Basn., liv. vii. c. 17.)

this astonishing visit, and the hidden meaning of this mysterious salutation.

The angel, who perceived her trouble, said to her mildly, "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of David his father: and he shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end." At these words, which would have transported any other but Mary with immoderate joy, the chaste and prudent young woman thought of nothing but her pure white crown of virginity, which she desired to preserve at any cost, and asked how she could reconcile this magnificent prediction with the vow of virginity with which her life was linked.[1]

The modesty of a young woman is a thing so sacred in the sight of angels, that Gabriel, to remove all apprehension from Mary on that head, was not afraid to unveil a part of the mystery of the Incarnation. "The power of the Most High shall overshadow thee," said he, "and the Holy that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."[2] Then, according to the custom of the messengers of Jehovah, he would give her a sign which should confirm his words: "And behold," continued the angel,

(1) Calvin, that proud heresiarch, who had Servetus burned, while he himself preached up toleration, has dared to calumniate the Virgin, taking his text from this answer, to accuse her of unbelief. St. Augustin had answered him long before. "The Virgin doubts not," said he, "*non quasi incredula de oraculo;* she only desires to be informed as to the manner in which the miracle is to be accomplished." St. John Chrysostom adds, "that this question is the effect of respectful admiration, and not of vain curiosity."

(2) This gospel narrative has been received by the Mussulmans themselves. This is how the Koran relates the interview of the Blessed Virgin and the angel: —"The angel said to Mary, God announces his Word to thee, he shall be called Jesus, the Messias, the Son of Mary, great in this world, and in the other, and the Confidant of the Most High; he shall make his word heard by men from the cradle to old age, and shall be of the number of the just.—My Lord, replied Mary, how shall I have a son? I know not man.—It shall be thus, replied the angel: God forms creatures at his pleasure; is it his will that a thing should exist? he says, Be thou made, and it is made."—(Koran, c. iii.)

"thy cousin Elizabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her that is called barren; because no word shall be impossible with God."

Sarah had laughed with incredulous laughter when an angel, in the guise of a traveller, seated in the shade of the great oaks which covered her tent, had announced a son to her, aged and barren as she was. Mary, to whom was announced a new prodigy, as Isaias declares, a thing without example under the sun, in fine, a virginal maternity, believed at once the divine promise, and, annihilating herself before Him who exalted her above all women, she replied, in a submissive voice, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word." At these words the angel disappeared, and the WORD was made flesh to dwell among us.[1] Thus did the angel of light treat of our salvation with the new Eve, and the fault of the sinful Eve, who had conspired for our destruction with the infernal angel, was gloriously repaired; thus was a simple mortal exalted to the unequalled dignity of Mother of God, and being both virgin and mother, she confounded, by a new miracle, the two most opposite and sublime states of her sex. "Proceed no farther," says St. John Chrysostom, "seek nothing beyond what is said, nor say, How did the Holy Ghost effect this in the Virgin? . . . . Enquire not, therefore, but receive what is revealed, and search not curiously into what is hidden."[2]

We have adopted the opinion of those doctors and theologians who maintain that Joseph was legally the husband of Mary at the time of the Incarnation; yet this opinion is disputed, and among the authorities who assert that Mary was not yet the wife, but only the betrothed of Joseph, we find in the first rank the great St. John Chrysostom himself.[3] Nevertheless, according to the

(1) The mystery of the Incarnation was accomplished on the 25th of March, on a Friday, in the evening, according to F. Drexelius.

(2) St. J. Chrys., Serm. 4, in St. Matt.

(3) Descoutures is wrong in placing St. John Chrysostom in the ranks of those who maintain that Joseph was legally the husband of Mary at the moment of the Incarnation; this writer, who is in general judicious, probably quoted him on trust.

same father, Mary dwelt in the house of St. Joseph at the time when the angel appeared to her. "For," says this illustrious sacred orator, "among the ancients it was the custom generally to have the betrothed in the house, and this may be seen even now: and the sons-in-law of Lot lived with him."[1]

Notwithstanding the profound veneration inspired by St. John Chrysostom, the Church has not adopted his opinion. Moreover, the reference to the sons-in-law of Lot, with which he would strengthen his opinion, is badly chosen: the Scripture nowhere says that they lived with Lot, and everything leads us to think the contrary, since the patriarch was obliged to *go out of his house* in a moment of trouble and affright, while the most hideous commotion was fomenting in the city, *to speak to his sons-in-law that were to have his daughters, to arise and get out of the place, because the Lord would destroy the city.* Supposing even that the young men betrothed to Lot's daughters had formed a part of the family of this patriarch, whose flocks covered the hills and valleys of a whole province,—according to the manners of the times, these young men would have been nothing more on the banks of the Jordan than what Jacob was later on in Mesopotamia, active and vigilant servants, *day and night parched with heat and with frost.*[2] We nowhere see that they had their betrothed spouses in their tents; they lived under the protection of the patriarch, being only his principal shepherds: there is nothing in all this at variance with the manners of ancient Asia. An orphan, left alone, and living under the roof of her betrothed, the Blessed Virgin, on the contrary, would have been in a position quite exceptional. A generally received custom among the Hebrews could alone have authorised such a supposition, and all that we find in their code is a law expressly opposed to it.[3] St. Chrysostom, agreeing in this respect with the ancient theologians, himself informs us that God for a long time covered with a

(1) St. J. Chrys., Serm. 4, in St. Matt.
(2) Gen. xxxi. 40.
(3) Misnah, t. iii. de Sponsalibus. Selden, Uxor Hebraica.

thick veil the miraculous maternity of Mary, to save her from a revolting suspicion, which would have been as dangerous to the divinity of the Son, as to that respect which the whole world owed to the Mother. But marriage alone could cover with its honourable mantle the mystery of the Incarnation, for mere espousals could not suffice for that purpose; and then, if Joseph and Mary had been only affianced at the time of the Incarnation of the WORD, they would have been no more four months later, since the Evangelist informs us that Mary, after the Annunciation, *went with haste* to visit St. Elizabeth, and that it was not till her return from her journey to Hebron, which had lasted three months, that she *was found with child*,—an expression which indicates a situation visible to all. At this rate, the marriage of Mary would not have been celebrated till her maternity had become evident, proved, undeniable! What would both families have thought of it? What would have been said by all Nazareth, who would have hastened to witness the ceremony? To what outrageous reproaches would the pure Virgin have been exposed, among a people where female honour was a thing so sacred as to be infallibly avenged by murder! Would not the birth of the Messias—that birth which was to be pure *as the morning dew*, according to the poetical expression of David—have been thereby tainted and defiled? The Jews, particularly the Jews of Nazareth, who showed such hostility to Jesus Christ, and called him the *son of the carpenter*, would they not have bitterly reproached him with the irregularity of his birth? If they did not do so, it was because they had apparently no hold on that side.

These, no doubt, are the reasons which have induced a number of illustrious divines to pronounce in favour of the marriage, notwithstanding the countenance which the opposite party found in the words of St. Matthew, words which seem to favour the other interpretation, but which nevertheless do not convey a meaning precise enough to remove the difficulty.[1] After

(1) The verse which has divided the doctors is this: "Christi autem generatio sic erat: *cum esset desponsata mater ejus Maria Joseph, antequam convenirent,*

all, the dispute never bore upon the principal point: wife or betrothed, no one, among Christians, has ever doubted that the Mother of God was the purest and most holy of virgins; even the Mussulmans admit that *she was the spring and mine of purity.*[1]

CHAPTER IX.

THE VISITATION.

MEANWHILE Mary, informed by the angel of the pregnancy of Elizabeth, resolved to go and offer her affectionate congratulations to her venerable relative. It was not, as heretics have dared to say, that the Virgin wanted ocular demonstration of the reality of

inventa est in utero habeus de Spiritu Sancto. Those who dwell on the force of the words, say that the Virgin was only betrothed, because the Greek verb, which is a translation of the Hebrew expression of St. Matthew, means *desponderi*, to be promised, and because there is another term to signify to be married, as we find among the Latins *desponderi* and *nubere*, so that St. Joseph had not yet taken the Virgin home to his house; which they prove by those words of verse 20:—"*Noli timere accipere Mariam conjugem tuam: quod enim in ea natum est, de Spiritu Sancto est,*" which they explain thus: "Take Mary for thy wife without fear, for what is born in her, is born by the operation of the Holy Ghost." But to be translated thus it must have been *in conjugem tuam.* The opposite opinion, which is maintained by fathers, interpreters of considerable weight, and almost all theologians, finds wherewith to combat its antagonists in the second chapter of St. Luke; for, notwithstanding that the Virgin was already married to Joseph, the gospel uses the Greek term ὑπισχνεῖσθαι, which signifies *to be promised*, and says: "*Ut profiteretur cum Maria desponsata sibi uxore prægnante*, to be enrolled with Mary his espoused wife, who was with child;" and in verse 19 of the first chapter of St. Matthew, St. Joseph is called *vir ejus*, her husband, and not her espoused. If St. Matthew calls the Blessed Virgin *sponsa*, spouse, although she was wife, it is not to say that she had not yet contracted marriage; it is merely to show, as one of the fathers remarks, that she had no more intimacy with her husband than if she had been only his betrothed.

(1) The purity of Mary is so fully recognised by the Mussulmans, that Abou-Ishac, ambassador of the caliph at the court of the Emperor of the Greeks, holding a conference with the patriarch and certain Greek bishops, on the subject of religion, the bishops reproached the Mussulmans with many things which had been formerly said by the Mussulmans themselves against Aïschah, the widow of

this event, which was out of the ordinary laws of nature; she knew that nothing is impossible to God, and, moreover, could not suppose that a messenger of heaven would bring her from the Most High words of deception and falsehood. She went, not to be made sure, but because she was sure; she went with haste, because charity, says St. Ambrose, admits neither delays nor hindrances; and besides, good and kind as she was during her whole life, she longed to carry to relations whose protection had surrounded her childhood, and who had long looked upon her as their daughter, some little of that sanctification and those heavenly graces which flowed in her soul as inexhaustible springs of living water, from the time that she bore in her chaste womb the Creator of the world.

With the consent of St. Joseph, whose simple but elevated soul was in unison with her own, and who had but one heart and will with her, Mary left Nazareth in the season of roses, and went towards the mountains of Judea, where Zachary dwelt. The Scripture, which neglects details, and takes up the leading points of events, does not say whether the Virgin had any companions in this journey; some authors have thence inferred that she performed it alone, which is not at all likely. In fact, the distance from Nazareth to the town of Ain[1] is five days' march; part of Galilee, the hostile Samaria, and almost all the territory of Juda had to be passed through. Now the country is rugged with mountains, intersected by torrents, and interspersed with deserts.[2] The roads, which the Romans repaired at a later period, full of holes made by the heavy footsteps of camels, and covered with

their prophet, which had stirred up divisions among them. Abou-Ishac answered them that they need not wonder at these dissensions, since among Christians opinions had been so divided on the subject of the glorious Mary, mother of Jesus, "who may be called," said he, "*the mine and fountain of all purity*, genab ismet mealo kon offet."—(D'Herbelot, Bibl. Orientale, t. ii. p. 620.)

(1) Zachary lived at Ain, or Aen, two leagues to the south of Jerusalem. St. Helen had a church built on the site of his house.

(2) Although Judea was much more populous then than now, there still remained districts so barren as to be incapable of cultivation. The gospel makes mention of deserts but a short distance from towns where Jesus Christ went to pray.

loose stones, threatened the traveller at every step with a fatal fall. When the evening came on, one must sleep in some caravansary, where nothing was to be found but a small place without provisions, and furnished with a plain rush mat;[1] for the primitive hospitality had marked by its gradual decrease the different phases of advanced civilization among the Hebrews. In such a state of things is it to be presumed that a man full of days and experience, like Joseph, would willingly have exposed a young wife—beautiful, delicate, brought up retired from the world, and confiding as innocence itself—to dangers of all sorts, to every kind of inconvenience which a solitary journey presented? Such an assertion contradicts the history of the people of God, and the manners of Asia;[2]—a Jewish woman would never have trusted herself, without a respectable escort, such a distance from her house.

If St. Joseph, as F. Croiset thinks, could not accompany Mary, it is probable that the Mother of God joined some of her relations who were led by their piety to the holy city, with their husbands, or their servants, and that thence she pursued her journey under some safe protection. We always find her travelling thus in the midst of her own relatives, whether she goes to Jerusalem for the great solemnities, or follows the preachings of Jesus with the holy women at a much more advanced period of her life. "Though she could have had no better guardian than herself," says St. Ambrose, "she never appeared abroad without being faithfully escorted."[3]

When she arrived at the priestly city where the Levite and

(1) "There is no inn in any part of Syria and Palestine," says M. de Volney, "but the towns and most of the villages have a large building called Kervanseraï, which serves as a shelter for all travellers. These receptacles, always placed outside the walls of towns, are composed of four arcades, which enclose a square court which serves as a place for the beasts: there are in these places neither provisions nor furniture."

(2) No one travels alone in Syria; the people only go in troops and caravans; they have to wait till several travellers want to proceed to the same place. These precautions are necessary in countries exposed to the Arabs, like Syria and Palestine.—(Volney, Voyage en Syrie.)

(3) St. Amb., de Virginibus, liv. i.

his happy wife dwelt, Mary was directed to their well-known house without allowing herself any time to rest. Elizabeth, informed by one of her slaves of the unexpected visit of her cousin, came to meet her with great signs of joy.

Seeing her approach, the young Virgin bowed, and laying her hand on her heart, said, "Peace be with thee," hastening to be the first to offer a salutation.[1] Elizabeth stepped back a little: the animated and friendly expression of her countenance had given place to profound respect; her features gradually brightened; it was evident that something unusual and prodigious was passing within her. The simple formulary of politeness which the Virgin had pronounced in her low and mild voice had overpowered her relation. All at once, the spirit of prophecy descended upon Elizabeth, and she cried out, "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me," she added, "that the Mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed art thou that hast believed, because those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord."

The answer of Mary was the sublime, unpremeditated effusion of the MAGNIFICAT, the first canticle of the New Testament, and the finest in the sacred Scriptures:

"My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

"Because he hath regarded the humility of his handmaid: for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

"For he that is mighty hath done great things to me, and holy is his name.

"And his mercy is from generation to generations to them that fear him.

(1) This salutation, which Jesus Christ often used, is still that of all the East. When the Orientals meet, after the ordinary salutation, "Peace be with you (*salem alaicom*)," they lay their hand on their heart. This salutation was in use in the time of Abraham.—(Savary, Note sur le c. ii. du Koran.)

"He hath showed might in his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart.

"He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble.

"He hath filled the hungry with good things: and the rich he hath sent empty away.

"He hath received Israel his servant, being mindful of his mercy.

"As he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed for ever."

Thus did the Virgin discern at once, by a supernatural light, those ancient prophecies and their perfect accomplishment, herself being a thousand times more enlightened and more privileged than all the prophets put together. "In this celebrated interview, and in this admirable conversation," says St. Ambrose, "Mary and Elizabeth both prophesied by the Holy Ghost, with whom they were filled, and by the merits of their infants."

The Virgin sojourned three months in the country of the heathens, and spent this long visit at a short distance from the city of Ain, in the hollow of a shady and fertile valley, where Zachary had his country house.[1] It was then that the daughter of David, herself also a prophetess, and endowed with genius equal to that of the illustrious head of her race, could contemplate at leisure the starry heavens, the sonorous forests, and the vast sea, which, at the horizon rolled its waves, whether loud or peaceful, on the blue resounding shores of Syria. The Blessed Virgin did not look with indifference upon these magnificent scenes of creation. All the works of nature spoke to her of their great Author, and came gently to warm her soul after charming her eyes. The plain which vanished from her sight beyond the mountains of Arabia, the blue vaulted sky which is spread like a tent above the habitations of men, gave her some idea of

(1) This country house was at a short distance from Ain, in a pleasant and fertile valley, which serves now as a garden to the village of Saint John. There had been built in this place, in honour of the Visitation, a church, which, in our days, is no more than a heap of ruins.

the immensity of God the Creator; the golden harvests, the savoury fruits, the cool mountain spring, proclaimed to her his providence; the voice of the tempest, his power; the regular order of the heavens, his wisdom; and the care which He takes of the birds of heaven and the insects of the earth, his goodness.

In these excursions in the country, she sometimes rested by the side of a gushing fountain, the foam and noise of which she loved: this spring, called Nephtoa in the time of Josue, bears to this day the name of "Mary."[1]

At the back of the elegant *villa* of the Hebrew priest extended one of those gardens called a *paradise* by the Persians, the mode of laying out which had been borrowed by the captives of Israel from the nation of Cyrus and Semiramis: there were seen the finest trees of Palestine; and the groups of flowers scattered irregularly about the open spaces, the sweet perfume of the orange-trees, the streams of water which ran beneath the low bending branches of the willows, made its shades very charming. There the sweet converse of Mary made Elizabeth forget her fears for an event, the hope of which overpowered her with joy, but which her advanced age might render fatal. How religious must have been the conversation of these two women! The one young, artless, and ignorant of evil as Eve when she came forth from the hands of the Lord; the other full of days, and rich in long experience of the things of life; both deeply pious, and objects of the complacency of Jehovah; the one bearing in her womb, so long barren, a son who was to be "a prophet and more than a prophet;" the other, the blessed germ of the Most High, the chief and liberator of Israel.

In the fine summer evenings, when the white light of the moon shone on the foliage, there was brought out beneath a large fig-tree, or under the green leafy branches of a thick vine,[2]

(1) This fountain has so great an abundance of water that it irrigates the whole valley and renders it productive. Tradition relates that Mary sometimes came thither; it bore the name of *Nephtoa* in the time of Josue; it now bears that of the *Fountain of the Virgin.*

(2) The Hebrews were fond of taking their meals in gardens, under trees,

the repast of the opulent family: the lamb fed in the deep valleys in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem, the kid of the aromatic mountains of Bethar, clean birds netted by the Israelite fowler, shell-fish caught by the fisherman of Sidon, milk, butter, and cheese, honeycombs; and then, in baskets of palm-leaves, pomegranates, figs, grapes from Galilee, with dates from Jericho,[1] which even figured on the table of Cæsar; there were also seen apricots from Armenia, plums from Damascus, pistachio nuts from Aleppo, water-melons from the banks of the Nile, and that sweet cane from the marshes of Egypt, which Herodotus speaks of as an exquisite eatable; lastly, the golden wine of Libanus, and the perfumed wine of Cyprus, which the steward kept in stone jars,[2] circulated in rich cups. Mary, temperate as ever in the midst of this abundance, was content with a little fruit and a cup of pure water. Frugality with her was no forced virtue, or an abstinence merely of circumstance; it was a virtue by choice.[3]

Some writers, to extol the humility of the Blessed Virgin, which needs no extraneous commendation, have insisted that she rendered to Elizabeth the offices of a *servant*, and almost of a slave.

This is an evident inconsistency: Elizabeth would never have allowed a woman whom she herself had proclaimed the Mother of her Lord, and whom she had highly extolled above all the daughters of Sion, to lower herself in such manner before her. The holy spouse of Zachary[4] could not have wanted

and in arbours; for it is natural, in hot countries, to seek air and coolness.—(Fleury, Mœurs des Israel., § xvii.)

(1) The dates of Syria and Judea are yellow and black, round, like apples, and very sweet. Pliny reckons forty-nine kinds of dates.

(2) The Jews established in the Yemen still make use of these jars.—(See Niebuhr, Voyage en Arabie.)

(3) Her abstinence did not appear to be a fast; it was rather a custom, as it were, not to make use of food.—(F. Valverde, Vie de J. Christ, t. i. p. 6.)

(4) Zachary was descended from Abia, father of the eighth priestly family. These ancient families were rare, several of them having settled in Persia after the captivity. Elizabeth was descended from Aaron and from David. The Jews reckoned John the Baptist far above Jesus, because he had passed his life

servants or slaves. By the consent of Christians and Jews, this family was distinguished, and the illustrious birth of St. John Baptist even cast something like discredit upon that of Jesus Christ, born of parents much less distinguished, and leading in poverty the common life of the people.

The attentions, therefore, which the amiable and gentle Virgin profusely paid to Elizabeth had nothing in them painful or servile; they were those delicate and forecasting attentions with which she would have waited upon her own mother, if heaven had spared her to her; and no doubt she often imagined that she beheld again the authors of her days in that affectionate, devout, and venerable pair, who loved her with parental affection, and who showed towards her from the first interview, when her greatness was so marvellously revealed, a sentiment of admiration mingled with respect, which Mary humbly endeavoured to prevent, but which she did not succeed in destroying.

It is easy to understand, say the fathers, how many blessings were drawn down by the visit of Mary upon the priestly family who had given her so affectionate a reception. If the Lord blessed Obededom, and all that belonged to him, even so far as to make the holy King David jealous, for having had the ark of the covenant in his house for three months, what graces must have been drawn down upon Zachary and all belonging to him by the three months' abode of Her of whom the ark of the covenant was but the figure, though so holy and awful! "The purity in which St. John always lived," says St. Ambrose, "was an effect of

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in the desert, and was the son of a chief priest. Jesus Christ, on the other hand, born of a poor woman, appeared to them as one of the common people.—(S. Joan. Chrysost. in Matt., Serm. 12.) The Mussulmans have retained a high idea of St. John Baptist, whom they call *Jahia ben Zacharia* (John, the son of Zachary). Saadi, in his Gulistan, makes mention of the sepulchre of St. John Baptist, venerated in the mosque of Damascus; he said some prayers there, and records those of a king of the Arabs, who came thither on a pilgrimage. "The Caliph Abdalmalek wanted to purchase this church out of the hands of the Christians," says D'Herbelot, "and it was only after their refusal of four thousand dinars, or gold pistoles, which he had offered them, that he took cossession of it by force."—(Bibliothèque Orientale, t. ii.)

that unction and that grace infused into his soul by the presence of the Virgin."

We know not precisely whether the Mother of God assisted at the lying-in of Elizabeth. Origen, St. Ambrose, and other grave authors, ancient as well as modern, declare for the affirmative, and this opinion is very probable; for it would have been at least very extraordinary, after having spent so long a time with her relation, if Mary had abruptly left her in the hour of danger, and without any reasonable motive for so unseasonable and precipitate a departure. Custom required that all the matrons of the family should assemble round the new mother, to rejoice with her in her happiness; the gospel informs us that they were not wanting to Elizabeth on this solemn occasion, and that the birth of St. John Baptist drew a large concourse of kinsfolk and friends to the house of his father. It is alleged that virgins were not generally found at these sort of gatherings, and this we can conceive; but Mary was married, which required of her those duties which became her, and which she could not omit without violating usages received from the time of the patriarchs. Some argue with as little reason, from the retired habits of the Virgin, to the conclusion that even the noise of the festivities which celebrated the birth of the precursor of Jesus Christ put her to flight like a young dove suddenly alarmed. Mary was quite able to reconcile her small inclination for the world with that exquisite sense of propriety attributed to her by the fathers, and her tender solicitude for her mother's niece: she must have remained beneath the roof of the priest until Elizabeth was out of danger: and then, escaping from that admiration which she never failed to excite, she left the mountains of Judea, after embracing and blessing the new Elias.[1]

(1) Those theologians who have embraced the contrary opinion to that of Origen and St. Ambrose, dwell upon that passage of St. Luke which does not speak of the *accouchement* of Elizabeth till after having brought the Blessed Virgin back into Galilee. It seemed to us that this deserved consideration: we therefore attentively examined the gospel of this evangelist; this minute examination convinced us that this reason is not conclusive; for it is the custom

A religious author observes that the blessed daughter of Joachim had hastened with all diligence to visit her cousin, but that she departed slowly, and as if with regret, from those cool valleys, the oaks of which had afforded shelter to angels;[1] perchance, like the sea-bird, she had a presentiment of storms.

CHAPTER X.

VIRGINAL PREGNANCY OF MARY.

On her return to Nazareth, Mary returned with ease to the life of the people, and resumed the humble occupations which she must have suspended in the more elevated sphere which she had just quitted. She became again the young housewife, active and diligent, who found time for work, time for prayer, time for reading the sacred books, whose whole conversation was in heaven, and who seemed to have applied to herself those beautiful and sage words of the Psalmist: "All the glory of the king's daughter is within." But meanwhile she advanced in her

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of St. Luke to make transpositions of this kind, and we can quote two others of the same nature. For example, after having followed up the preaching of St. John Baptist, and announced his imprisonment, St. Luke speaks, in the following verse, of the baptism of Jesus Christ, of the priority of which to the prison of the precursor, and his tragical death, there can be no doubt. When relating the adoration of the shepherds, St. Luke expatiates on the marvellous accounts which they gave of their journey to the cave of Bethlehem, and of the astonishment which these recitals caused; after which, taking us back without any transition to the interrupted scene of the adoration, he speaks of their departure from the stable. This is what makes us adopt the doctrine of St. Ambrose, the probability of which strikes us at first sight. F. Valverde, who studied the holy fathers deeply, is equally of opinion that the Blessed Virgin did not leave her relations till she had embraced and blessed the precursor of the Messias.

(1) In the vale of Mambre, which is only six furlongs from Hebron, there was still shown in the time of St. Jerom, a tree of enormous growth, beneath which it was said that Abraham had received the visit of the three angels who announced to him the birth of Isaac.

virginal pregnancy, and Joseph began to be full of anxious thought.

A poignant uncertainty, a painful perplexity, tortured the great and upright soul of the patriarch. At first he did not believe his eyes, and he found it more reasonable to doubt the testimony of his senses, than the purity of a woman who had always appeared to him a prodigy of candour and sanctity. But the condition of Mary became more and more visible; *she was found with child*, says the gospel, which means that all Nazareth was informed of it, and that Joseph's relations, in the innocence of their hearts, offered him painful congratulations, which he was obliged to receive without changing countenance, and which struck him at once like a flash of lightning. According to the Prŏto-Gospel of St. James, in the first transports of his grief, he prostrated himself before God with his face on the ground, and all bathed in tears, crying out, "Who has betrayed me? who has brought evil into my house?" Then, yielding to his tender affection for the young orphan whom he had ever regarded as the pearl and honour of her sex, he bitterly accused himself of not having guarded her with sufficient care. "Alas!" he said to himself, "my history is that of Adam; when he reposed with the greatest confidence in his glory and happiness, behold on a sudden Satan deceived Eve with lying words, and seduced her."[1] When Joseph was sufficiently calm in mind to reflect, he found himself in great perplexity.

According to the Jewish law, adultery was punished by death. When there were no witnesses,—a single one would suffice,—and the woman denied the crime laid to her charge, she was led, by order of the sanhedrim, to the eastern gate of the temple, and there, in presence of all, after snatching off her veil, placing about her neck a cord brought from Egypt, to put her in mind of the miracles which God had wrought in that land, and covering her shoulders with her dishevelled hair, because it was a disgrace for a Jewish woman to be seen with her hair in that state, a

(1) Protevang. Jac., in the apocryph. of Fabric., t. i. p. 97.

priest, pronouncing a terrible formulary of malediction, to which she had to answer *Amen*, presented her with the famous cup of the *waters of jealousy*, which were also called *bitter waters*, because they had the taste of wormwood.[1] This cup of malediction infallibly caused the guilty wife to die, unless the husband himself had been guilty of infidelity; for then the miracle did not take place, "because," say the doctors of Israel, "it would not have been just that one of the guilty should be absolved, while God punished the other."[2] A husband of a violent temper would not have failed to drag Mary before the priests of the Lord, to subject her to the formidable trial of the bitter waters; but Joseph, the most moderate, as well as the most just of men, did not so much as think of taking this extreme course. Not being able to retain Mary under his roof, since both the law of honour and the law of Moses conspired to prevent him from so doing, he wished at least to take all possible precautions to prevent this painful separation from casting any shade upon her virtue,—for *he was a just man, and not willing publicly to expose her.* "I will put her away," said Joseph mournfully to himself, "but before God, and not before the judges, who would condemn her to die, and me to cast the first stone at her;[3] I will save her from the reproaches of her family and the contempt of the world: but how can I get clear of this labyrinth, where dishonour and death present themselves at every outlet?" And the son of David remained plunged in extreme depression of mind.

The gloomy sadness of the just man, to whom God himself had entrusted her, could not escape Mary, and no doubt it cost her a great deal to conceal from Joseph the glorious embassy of the angel; but how could she unveil an event so unheard of, so miraculous, as that of her divine maternity, with no other proof than her own word? Persuaded with reason that, to be believed, the mystery of the Incarnation must be revealed by supernatural

(1) Basn., liv. vii. c. 22.
(2) Wagenseil, in Sotah, p. 244.
(3) The Jewish law required that the accuser should cast the first stone at him whom he had caused to be condemned.—(Voy. Institut. de Moïse, t. ii. p. 65.)

means, and leaving to Him, who had wrought so great things in her, the care of convincing Joseph of her innocence, "the daughter of David," says the great Bishop of Meaux, "at the risk of seeing herself not only suspected and forsaken, but even lost and dishonoured, left all to God, and remained in peace."

The Eternal, from the height of his starry throne, looked down with complacency upon the just man, whom he had subjected to this severe trial,[1] before he raised him to the supreme honour of being his own representative upon earth, and the angels, with their eyes fixed on the holy house of Nazareth, anxiously awaited the result of this close contest, in which humanity, duty, and the noblest sentiments of the soul were engaged. At last, the patriarch ended with an idea so generous and heroic, that it places him almost on a level with the Queen of angels: he resolved to sacrifice his honour, the esteem which he had acquired by a spotless life, the means of existence which gave him his daily bread, and the air of his native land, so good to breathe when one is drawing near to the tomb, in order to save the reputation of a wife, who did not even attempt to justify herself, and who was so cruelly accused by appearances. There was but one way of parting with Mary without ruining her, for her family would have been urgent for explanations which would have terminated fatally: and this was to banish himself, to go and die afar off in the land of exile, and to take upon his own head all the odium of such a desertion. There are resignations as glorious as triumphs, and sufferings patiently supported, which heaven rewards as munificently as martyrdom; the unknown sacrifice of the spouse of the Virgin was of this number. To reconcile together his duty and his humanity, he accepted by anticipation the sad reproaches of being a husband without a

(1) "Doubtless," says Bossuet (Elev. sur les Myst.), "God could have spared Joseph all this pain, by revealing to him earlier the mystery of the pregnancy of Mary; but his virtue would not have been put to the trial which was prepared for him; we should not have witnessed the victory of Joseph over the most untameable of all passions, and the most righteous jealousy that was ever conceived, would not have been laid prostrate at the feet of virtue."

heart, a father without feeling, a man without conscience and without faith; he accepted the contempt of his relations, the mortal hatred of the relatives of Mary, and resolved to tear off with his own hand the crown of his good name to cast it before the feet of that young woman, whose mysterious and inexplicable position filled his heart with sadness, and his life with bitterness.

St. John Chrysostom is never tired of admiring the fine and noble conduct of St. Joseph. "It was necessary," says this great saint, "that when grace was approaching, there should be many signs of this sublime dispensation. For as the sun, though not yet showing its rays, still at a distance enlightens the greatest part of the earth, so also Christ, when about to issue from that womb, enlightened the whole world before his birth. Therefore, even before his birth, prophets exulted, women prophesied, and John, not yet born, leaped in the womb. Here, also, Joseph exhibited great wisdom."

We have here adopted the opinion of St. John Chrysostom in in preference to that of St. Bernard, who supposes that Joseph himself discovered the mystery of the birth of Jesus Christ, and that seeing Mary pregnant, he did not doubt, from the profound veneration which he had for her, that she must be the miraculous Virgin of Isaias. "He believed it," says the apostle of the crusades, "and it was with no other sentiment than one of humility and respect,—like that which made St. Peter afterwards say, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord,'—that St. Joseph, who was no less humble than St. Peter, also thought of departing from the Virgin, not doubting that she bore in her sacred womb the Saviour of mankind."

This interpretation, doubtless one of great piety, and worthy of one who has been honoured with the title of the *devout chaplain of Mary*, is more in accordance with the ascetic notions of the middle ages than agreeable to the manners of the ancient Hebrews, and must fall to the ground before a careful examination of the text. In fact, the words of the gospel are so clear, that no small ingenuity would be required to obscure them. It is not that instinctive movement of religious awe which makes us keep

at a distance from a sacred object, which suggests to Joseph the idea of forsaking Mary; it is a thought of conscience and duty. "He was a just man," says Bossuet, "and his justice did not allow him to remain in company with a wife whom he could not believe innocent; for merely to suspect what had happened by the operation of the Holy Ghost, that was a miracle of which God had hitherto given no example, and which could not come into any human mind."[1]

The words of the angel would have no sense, and would lead to a false conclusion, in the supposition of St. Bernard. "Fear not," says the ambassador of the Most High, "to take unto thee Mary, thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost." Does Joseph object his unworthiness at the moment when he becomes certain that Mary bears in her womb the Author of nature himself? Does he lay before the angel his scruples, which must be now more urgent than ever? Does he ask that this humble cup, which the celestial envoy presents him, may pass from him to some more worthy mortal? He does nothing of all this; the storms of the soul are appeased, and he falls into the profound calm which follows great moral tempests.

It is objected that the great oracles relating to the Messias were familiar to Joseph as they were to all the Hebrews, that he must have known that the time of the Messias was near at hand, and that he ought to have understood from the very first, considering the holiness of Mary, that she bore in her womb the Saviour of the world. To understand the prophecies which treated of the mystery of redemption was not so easily attained as is here supposed. Whether the allegorical descriptions of the glorious reign of the Emmanuel of Isaias had led the doctors of the synagogue into error, or whether the avaricious thoughts of the Jews could not rise above the earth, and reduced everything to temporal possessions, it is certain that the Hebrew people, "that people of a hard head," had got upon a wrong track, and would not deviate from it. He who was sent from God, the

(1) Bossuet, Elev. sur les Myst., t. ii. p. 135.

Desired of nations, was to be a lawgiver, a leader of war, a magnificent and formidable monarch, like Solomon. The apostles themselves were long under a mistake as to the humble and peaceful mission of "the poor King who passed noiselessly along;" we see them clinging to golden dreams and kingdoms in prospect, even in sight of the deicide city, which their Master was entering to die. It was not without some difficulty that our Lord brought them back to a spiritual sense,—that he rectified their ideas, always ready to fall into the narrow compass of material and palpable goods, where they were tossed about by the ambitious reveries of traditionary doctors and pharisees.

If then the apostles, those divine men who founded Christianity, had so much difficulty in divesting themselves of the prejudices of their childhood, they who lived in the midst of the miracles of the Messias, and in familiar intercourse with him, how could Joseph do this of himself, and without succour from above? The coarse garment of the artizan but little accorded with the purple of the kings of Juda, and the thing of all least expected was to have a Messias born from the ranks of the common people. Galilee, moreover, was the last place which would have been thought of. "Doth the Christ come out of Galilee?" said the doctors of the law to the disciples of Christ. In fact, the prophets had pointed out Bethlehem of Juda by name, Bethlehem, "the house of bread," as the birthplace of the Messias: and the rabbinical commentators, improving upon the prophets, distinguished even the quarter of the town where he was to be born.[1] Joseph was too humble to suppose that his modest roof could harbour so much greatness, and the silence of Mary left him nothing to conjecture.

As to the project of sending back the Virgin to her family "out of pure respect," as some learned theologians would have it who adhere to the opinion of St. Bernard, it would have been

(1) Whence comes he (the Messias)? From the royal city of Bethlehem, of Juda. Where are his parents to be found (those of the Messias)? In the quarter Biral Harba of *Bethlehem Juda*.—(See Talmud of Jerusalem.)

impracticable in a nation so apt to take umbrage at everything that affected the honour of women. Mary was an orphan, and so far dependant upon her kinsfolk, who were not all of a peaceful temper, and some of whom had not approved of the union of their young relative with the obscure Nazarean. It is not likely that they would have accepted the reasons of Joseph, and admitted, without more ample information, that the Virgin bore in her womb the *King Messias*. It is much more to be presumed that they would have denounced the husband before the tribunal of the ancients, to force him to give the reasons which influenced his conduct; for there was no longer any question of a simple divorce, but of the condition of the child of Mary,—a young woman of noble blood and badly married, according to those eleven who had entered themselves on the lists to espouse the young and fair heiress of Joachim.

Thence would have resulted two grave facts: either Joseph would have kept silence, and then he would have been condemned to take back his wife, with the prohibition ever to separate from her,[1] or he would have declared upon oath that the child which Mary bore was not his; and then the child, disowned, became incapacitated for any employment; his birth, defiled in its source, shut him out from the assemblies of the nation, the public schools, entering the temple, and the synagogues; his posterity, paying for his disgrace, would not have been admitted to the privileges of the Hebrews till the tenth generation; he became a *Paria*,—without an asylum, without rights, without country,—and the decree which would have condemned his mother to be stoned would have branded in the forehead, both him and his descendants, with Cain's mark of reprobation. But things would not have come to this pass: rather than submit to this stain upon their royal genealogy, the proud descendants of David would have killed the Virgin with their own hands. Such examples are not rare, and appear again even in our days in Judea, as well as in Arabia.[2]

(1) Inst. de Moïse, t. ii. liv. vii.

(2) Niebuhr relates, that "in a coffee-house of Yemen, an Arab having asked

Joseph was too wise and too humane to place himself in either alternative; and it happened, as it always does, that the more generous course was also the better. He resolved then to leave his city, and the woman who since their chaste hymen had made his life so sweet and happy. As he was preparing for this sad separation, and sleeping with troubled sleep upon his solitary couch, "The angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep, saying: Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a Son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save the people from their sins."

After this dream, and the word of the angel, Joseph found himself changed. The honour which God had done him, in transferring to him his own rights over his only Son, had not in the least affected his humility; but he had become father, he had become spouse, in heart, and his only thought now was, to take care of Mary and her divine Infant.

St. John Chrysostom asked himself why the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph, and not manifestly, as he did to the shepherds, to Zachary, and to the Virgin. "He was,"

one of his fellow-countrymen if he was not the father of a young woman lately married in his tribe, the father, who suspected some intention to ridicule in this question, and thought the honour of his family compromised, coolly rose up, ran to his daughter's house, and without uttering a word plunged his *cangiar* in her heart." F. de Geramb mentions an anecdote of the same kind:—"The widow of a Catholic of Bethlehem," says he, "was the object of a painful suspicion; not knowing how to escape the vengeance of her relations, she took refuge in the convent of the Fathers of the Holy Land, and placed herself under the sacred protection of the altar. Her asylum was discovered, the gates of the monastery were forced, and the young woman dragged, with her hair all dishevelled, into the public market-place, amidst the shouts of the populace and the suppliant voices of the religious, who implored, in the name of a crucified God, forgiveness and mercy for this unhappy creature, who protested with tears that she was innocent. She appealed in despair to her father and her brothers, adjured them in the most moving manner to save her from a cruel death: they came forward sullenly; each held a dagger; the poor creature shuddered; and a moment after, the three daggers were buried in her breast, and the murderers, washing their hands in the blood of their respective daughter and sister, congratulated themselves on having washed away the disgrace of their family."

said he, answering himself, "a man of wonderful faith, nor did he need such a vision. For the Virgin, to whom so great a thing was announced, and much greater than to Zachary, required a wonderful kind of vision even before the thing itself took place; and the shepherds, as being less refined, had need of a more manifest vision. But this man after the conception, being beset with an evil suspicion of mind, and yet ready to be brought back easily to good hope, if any one should appear to guide him in this matter, receives the revelation. . . . . See then what great things are done; the philosophy of the man is exhibited, and what the angel declares so opportunely serves to confirm his faith, and the word itself remains without suspicion, which shows that he suffered what every man might justly endure."[1]

CHAPTER XI

BIRTH OF THE MESSIAS.

Meantime, the *wicked empire*[2] had planted its eagles even to the extremities of the globe; the Romans had taken the oriental world as in a net; the Samaritan trembled before them in the depth of his deserts, and the most remote nation of Asia, the peaceful Chinese, sent a solemn embassy to Cæsar to seek his powerful friendship. Egypt and Syria were already no more than Roman provinces; Judea itself was tributary, and the King of the Jews, purchasing with gold a capricious protection, was but a crowned slave. The time was come; the oracles relating to the Messias were about to be accomplished; the power of Rome was on the decline, as Balaam had foretold, and according to the grand prophecy of Jacob, the sceptre had departed from

(1) S. Joan. Chrysost., Serm. 4, in S. Matt.

(2) The Jews designated the Roman empire by the name of "the wicked empire."

Juda: for the phantom of royalty which still hovered over the holy city was not even national. It was then that an edict of Augustus Cæsar was published in Judea, for an enrolment to be made of the people subject to his sceptre. This enrolment, much more complete than that which had taken place in the sixth consulship of the nephew of Julius Cæsar,[1] comprised not only persons, but property and the several kinds of land: it was the basis on which it was intended to ground the tax on servitude.[2]

The Roman governors were ordered to see the imperial edict executed, each in his department.[3] Sextius Saturninus, governor of Syria, began first with Phœnicia and Cœlo-Syria, rich and populous cantons, which required long and patient labour; that which, in our Europe, William the Conqueror, a thousand years later, caused to be done, in order to draw up that famous register so well known to the English, under the name of "Domesday Book," can alone give an idea of it. After having executed the orders of Cæsar in the Roman province, as well as in the kingdoms and tetrarchies dependant upon it, at the end of three years from the date of the decree,[4] they found themselves arrived

(1) Augustus had three general enrolments in every province of the empire: the first, during his sixth consulship with Agrippa, in the year 28 before the Christian era; the second under the consulate of C. Marius Censorinus and C. Asinius Gallus, in the year 8 before the same era; and the third and last, under the consulate of Sextus Pompeius Nepos and Sextus Apuleius Nepos, in the year 14 of the Christian era. It is of the second enrolment that St. Luke speaks; the decree which ordered it was made in the eighth year before the Christian era.—(Sueton., in Octav. 27.)

(2) Augustus at that time had a work prepared which contained the description of the Roman empire, and of those countries dependant upon it. Tacitus, Suetonius, and Dion Cassius make mention of this book, and of all the separate descriptions which were drawn up in the provinces. By the way in which they speak of it, it must have been something very complicated.

(3) Tertullian assures us that it was Sextius Saturninus who had to do it for Syria, he being president thereof.

(4) The three years which were taken up with this enrolment, executed by the Roman prefect, cannot raise any difficulty, for certainly it required no less time to draw up the register of Syria, Cœlo-Syria, Phœnicia, and Judea. Joab had consumed nearly ten months in making the simple list of men capable of bearing arms in the ten tribes; and the census of Augustus, at the birth of Jesus Christ embraced many other details, as it extended not only to every individual,

at length at Bethlehem, precisely at the memorable epoch of the birth of our Saviour. Cæsar and his agents had no other thought than of doing an administrative work, by ascertaining the population and resources of the empire; but God had other designs, which they executed unconsciously by their merely human views. His son was to be born at Bethlehem of Juda, the humble country of King David: he had caused it to be foretold by his prophet, more than seven hundred years before; and now behold the whole world in commotion to accomplish this prophecy.

It appears that faithful to ancient usage, the Jews still had themselves inscribed by families and tribes. David was born at Bethlehem, his descendants regarded that little city as their natal town, and the nursery of their house; there it was, then, that they assembled to give in their names, and the state of their fortunes, in compliance with the edict of Cæsar.

The autumn was coming to an end; the torrents rolled with a loud noise in the depths of the valleys, the north wind blew through the lofty turpentine-trees, and a sky laden with grey clouds announced the approach of snows. One dull and gloomy morning, in the year of Rome 748,[1] a Nazarene was seen busily occupied with preparations for a journey, which no doubt he was not at liberty to put off; for the time seemed ill-chosen, and the young wife who accompanied him, and whom he seated carefully on the quiet and gentle animal which is still preferred by the women of the East, was far advanced in pregnancy. At the saddle of the fine animal[2] ridden by the young woman of Galilee, was fastened a basket, made of palm leaves, containing provisions for

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but to all particulars of their landed possessions. William the Conqueror, who had a work something similarly compiled among the English, employed six whole years about it, although Domesday Book contains neither Scotland, nor Ireland, nor Wales, nor the Channel Islands.

(1) Never was any date more disputed than that of the birth of Jesus Christ. We adopt that of the authors of l'Art de Verifier les Dates, which appears to us the best founded, and which places the birth of our Saviour on the 25th of December, in the year of Rome 748. According to Baronius, the day of our Saviour's birth was a Friday.

(2) The asses in Palestine are remarkably beautiful.

the journey: dates, figs, and raisins, some thin cakes of barley meal, and an earthen vessel from Ramla, to hold water from the spring or the cistern. A goat-skin bottle, of Egyptian make, was hung on the opposite side. The traveller threw over his shoulder a wallet containing a bundle of clothes, girded his loins, wrapped himself up in his cloak of goats' hair, and holding in one hand his hooked stick, held with the other the bridle of the ass which carried the young woman. Thus they quitted their poor dwelling, which was left to itself, and passed down the narrow streets of Nazareth, amidst wishes of a good journey, and safe return to their kindred and neighbours, who exclaimed on all sides, "Go in peace!" These travellers, who set out on a journey in a cloudy morning, were the humble descendants of the great kings of Juda—Joseph and Mary—who were going, by order of a pagan and a stranger, to enrol their obscure names by the side of the most illustrious names of the kingdom.

This journey, undertaken during the rigorous season, and across a country like Palestine, must have been extremely painful to the Blessed Virgin, in the situation in which she found herself; yet she made no complaint; this feeble and delicate young woman had a mind firm and courageous,—a great soul, which was not elevated with greatness, knew how to possess itself in joy,—and in silence accepted misfortune. Joseph, who moved along pensive at her side, meditated on the ancient oracles, which promised, four thousand years ago, a deliverer to his people; as he travelled on to Bethlehem, whither he was led by the supreme will of a Roman, he thought of the words of the prophet Micheas: "And thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, art a little one among the thousands of Juda; out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be the ruler in Israel."[1] Then, looking at his poor equipage and his humble companion, whose simple outfit was suitable to her condition, he thought over in his mind the great oracles of Isaias: "And he shall grow up as a tender plant before him, and as a root out of a thirsty ground: . . . . despised, and the most

(1) Mich. v. ii.

abject of men."[1] And the patriarch began to understand the designs of God with regard to his Christ.

After a painful journey of five days, the travellers distinguished Bethlehem at a distance, the city of kings, seated on an eminence, amid smiling hills planted with vines, olive-groves, and woods of green oaks. Camels carrying women wrapped in purple cloaks, and with their heads covered with white veils, Arab *nakas*, ridden at full gallop by young horsemen splendidly clad, groups of old men upon beautiful white she-asses, discoursing gravely, like the ancient judges of Israel,[2] were going up to the city of David, which was already occupied by a multitude of Hebrews who had arrived during the preceding days. Outside, but at a little distance from the city, a building arose of quadrangular form, the white walls of which stood out from the pale green of the olive-trees which covered the hill: one would have said it was a Persian caravansary. Within its open gate, a number of slaves and servants were seen going and coming in its ample court: it was the inn. Joseph, urging on the beast on which the Virgin was mounted, made up to it, in the hope of arriving in time to secure one of those small apartments which belong by right to the first comer, and which were refused to no one;[3] but the caravansary overflowed with merchants and travellers; there was not a place left; at a price of gold one might perhaps have been found, for the hotel-keeper was a Jew, and a Jew of Bethlehem: but Joseph had no gold.

The patriarch returned sorrowful to Mary, who smiled upon him with resignation, and again seizing the bridle of the poor

(1) Is. liii. 2.

(2) The horse was used, especially among the Jews, by the warrior; it was also taken as the symbol of combats. The judges, on the contrary, rode upon asses of a species perfectly beautiful. Hence those words of the Bible: "Speak: you that ride upon fair asses, and you that sit in judgment."—(Judges v. 10.)

(3) Nothing is found in the cells of the caravansary, or palace of caravans, but the four walls, dust, and sometimes scorpions. The keeper's business is merely to give the key and a mat; the traveller ought to have provided himself with the rest; thus he should take his bed, his cooking apparatus, and even his provisions with him.—(Volney, Voyage en Syrie.)

animal, who was ready to drop with fatigue, he began to wander about the places and streets of the little city, hoping, but in vain, that some charitable Bethlehemite would offer them a lodging for the love of God. No one offered them anything. The night wind fell cold and piercing upon the young Virgin, who never uttered a complaint, but who became more and more pale: she could hardly keep life within her. Joseph continued his fruitless efforts in despair; and alas! more than once he saw the door which had been unfeelingly shut against him opened to some more wealthy stranger. Self-interest, that ruling passion of the Jews, must have petrified the soul of every one, for the situation of Mary to excite no compassion. The night came on: the two, seeing themselves rejected by every one, and despairing of obtaining a shelter in the city of their forefathers, went out from Bethlehem without knowing whither to direct their steps, and moved forward at hazard into the country, lighted by the expiring glimmer of the twilight, and echoing with the cry of the jackals who prowled about in search of their prey.

On the south, and at a short distance from the inhospitable city, a dark cave appeared, which was hollowed out of the rock; this cave, the mouth of which looked towards the north, and which became narrower towards the end, served the Bethlehemites as a common stable, and sometimes as a refuge for the shepherds in stormy nights. They both blessed heaven, who had guided them to this rude shelter; and Mary, leaning on the arm of Joseph, went and sat down upon a bare piece of stone, which formed a kind of narrow and inconvenient seat in a hollow part of the rock.

It was there, "in the fortification of the rock," as the prophet Isaias had foretold,[1] at the moment when the rising of the mysterious constellation of the Virgin marked the hour of midnight,[2]

(1) Justin appeals to the prophecy of Isaias for the birth of Jesus in the cave: "He shall dwell on high; the fortifications of rocks shall be his highness."—(Ch. xxxiii. 16.)

(2) "It is a fact independent of all hypotheses," says Dupuis, "independent of all consequences which I desire to draw from it, that *precisely at the hour of*

that the *alma*[1] of the grand prophecy of the Messias, in the midst of a solemn pause of nature, concealed by a luminous cloud,[2] brought into the world Him to whom God himself had given birth "before the hills,"[3] and "whose generation was from eternity." He appeared all at once, like the sunbeam parting from the cloud, to the eyes of his astonished young mother, and came to take possession of the throne of his poverty, while all the angels of God, bending the knee before him, adored him under his human form.[4] This virginal parturition was free from cries and pains; and not a single groan disturbed the sacred silence of that night full of prodigies and mysteries. Miraculously conceived, Jesus is born still more miraculously.

God prepared for the world a grand and novel spectacle, when he caused a poor king to be born. The palace which he destined for him was a deserted stable—a fit shelter for him who as he advanced in years was to say, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." Moses, proscribed from his birth, had at least a cradle of rushes, when his sister, the youthful Mary, exposed him in the midst of the bulrushes and sacred lotus plants which dip their leaves in the Nile at the close of day;[5] but Jesus, the divine

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midnight, on the 25th of December, in those ages when Christianity made its appearance, the heavenly sign which rose in the horizon, and the ascendant of which presided at the opening of the new solar revolution was, the *Virgin of the Constellations*."

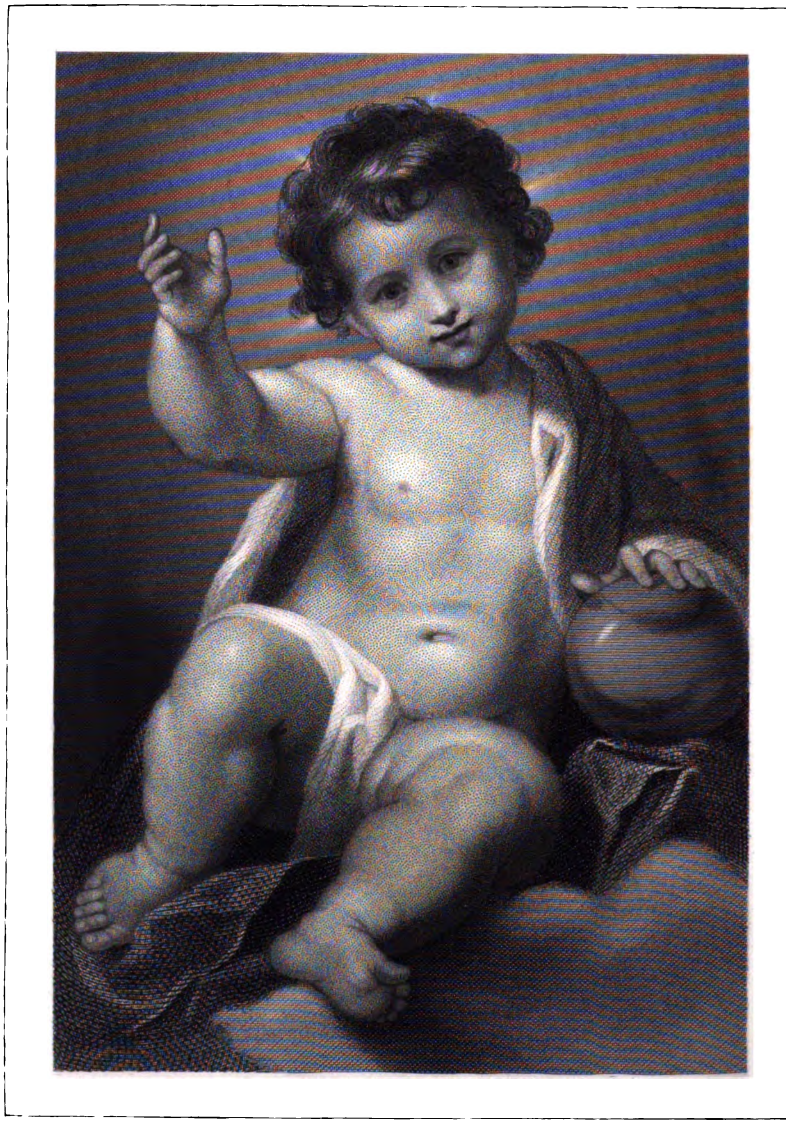
(1) The word *alma*, which Isaias used, signifies in Hebrew a virgin in all her innocence. We have already said, in note 3, p. 28 of the first chapter, that this word has given occasion to very great controversies between Jews and Christians.

(2) Protevang., S. Jac., c. 17.

(3) According to the opinion of the rabbins, the Messias was in the terrestrial Paradise by the side of our first parents.—(Sohar Chadasch, f. 82, 4.) He existed even before the world.—(Nezach Israel, c. 35.) And before he became man, he was in the state of glory with God.—(Phil. ii. 6.) Thus, immediately before the time of Jesus Christ, the idea of a pre-existence of the Messias existed in the superior theology of the Jews.

(4) Heb. i. 6; Psalm xlvi. 7.

(5) The *lotus*, which was consecrated to the sun, is a water-plant, the leaves of which dip into the Nile when the sun sets, and emerge from it when he rises. This plant has the virtue of lulling to sleep. They used to say to those who



Barrocchio — W. Holl

THE INFANT SAVIOUR.

forsaken one, who came among us to suffer and die, had not even so much magnificence as this: he was laid in a manger, upon a handful of damp straw providentially forgotten by some camel-driver of Egypt or Syria, in haste to set out before daybreak. God had provided for the couch of his only Son, even as he provides for the nests of the birds of heaven.

It was necessary to cover this new Adam, whose members would have been starved by the cold air, and whom modesty and necessity alike required to be clothed. Mary made him out of her veil swaddling bands, with which she wrapped him up with her chaste hands; then was the God newly born adored by her and her holy spouse, as Joseph of old, the finest type of Jesus Christ, had been before by his father and mother.

St. Basil, entering into the mysteries of fervour and rapture which passed in the soul of the Virgin, exhibits her to us as if divided between the love of the mother and the adoration of the saint. "What should I call thee?" says she, addressing her Infant-God; "what should I call thee? . . . . a mortal? . . . . but I conceived thee by divine operation . . . . A God? . . . . but thou hast a human body. Ought I to come before thee with incense, or to offer thee my breast? Ought I to lavish upon thee all the cares of a tender mother, or to serve thee with my forehead bowed down to the dust? O wonderful contrast! the heavens are thy abode, and I nurse thee on my knees! Thou art upon earth, and yet thou art not separated from the inhabitants of the celestial regions: the heavens are with thee."

Thus were accomplished the grand oracles of Micheas and Isaias:—

"And there were in the same country shepherds watching and keeping the night-watches over their flock. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of God shone round about them, and they feared with a great fear. And the angel said to them: Fear not, for behold I bring you good

made long journeys that they had eaten of the *lotus*, that is, that they had forgotten their country.—(Basn., liv. ix. c. 15.)

tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people; for this day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign unto you: you shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and laid in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God, and saying: GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST; AND ON EARTH PEACE TO MEN OF GOOD WILL."[1]

(1) In a very pleasant plain, situated a quarter of a league to the north of the town of Bethlehem, is found the village of the shepherds, and in the depth of the valley the celebrated field where these shepherds were tending their flocks during the night of the nativity. According to grave authors, both sacred and profane, the appearance of the angels to the shepherds is not the only prodigy which signalized the birth of the Infant-God. It is related, that during that sacred night, the vines of Engaddi blossomed, and that at Como the temple of Peace fell down on a sudden, and the oracles of the demons were silent for ever. The very birth of our Lord was a sentence of banishment for those pagan divinities who had been till then permitted to give oracles. Milton, in an admirable poetic vein, thus describes, in one of his earliest pieces of verse, the departure of those pretended divinities on the eve of the nativity:—

"The oracles are dumb,
No voice or hideous hum,
Runs through the arched roof in words deceiving.
Apollo from his shrine
Can no more divine,
With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving.
No nightly trance, or breathed spell,
Inspires the pale-eyed priest from the prophetic cell.

"The lonely mountains o'er,
And the resounding shore,
A voice of weeping heard and loud lament;
From haunted spring and dale,
Edged with poplar pale,
The parting Genius is with sighing sent;
With flower-inwoven tresses torn,
The nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets mourn.

"In consecrated earth,
And on the holy hearth,
The Lars and Lemures moan with midnight plaint;
Inurns and altars round,
A drear and dying sound
Affrights the flamens at their service quaint;
And the chill marble seems to sweat,
While each peculiar power foregoes his wonted seat.

["Peor

The marvellous vision had disappeared, the heavenly songs had ceased, and the shepherds, leaning forward upon their knotty staves, were still listening.

When the night breezes moaned alone in the valley, and there was only left in the sky a single white and shining spot, which might seem to be an angel, the shepherds consulted together, and "said one to another, Let us go over to Bethlehem, and let us see this word that is come to pass, which the Lord hath showed to us." Then taking in baskets such humble presents as their huts could supply, they made their way, by the bright light of the stars, to the little city of David. At the sight of the stable they felt, like the disciples at Emmaus, that their hearts were burning, and they said one to another, "Perhaps this is the place;" for they knew that the divine Infant who was born unto them had not seen the light beneath a rich roof, and that he was not laid in a sumptuous cradle for a throne; the angel had made no such announcement. They approached then with faith, with hope, with love, towards the place where they well deserved to meet the promised Saviour, since they came to seek him there with upright intentions and pure souls.

Looking into the farthest recess of the cave, to ascertain whether they had really come to the end of their nocturnal

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"Peor and Baalim
Forsake their temples dim,
With that twice battered god of Palestine;
And mooned Ashtaroth,
Heaven's queen and mother both,
Now sits not girt with taper's holy shine;
The Lybic Hammon shrinks his horn,
In vain the Tyrian maids their wounded Thammuz mourn.

"And sullen Moloch fled,
Hath left in shadows dread
His burning idol all of blackest hue;
In vain with cymbals' ring,
They call the grisly king,
In dismal dance about the furnace blue
The brutish gods of Nile as fast,
Isis and Orus, and the dog Anubis, haste."

pilgrimage, *these men of good-will* discovered Him who came to preach the gospel to the poor, and to abolish *the malediction of slavery*, under the humble form of a little infant quietly asleep in his manger.

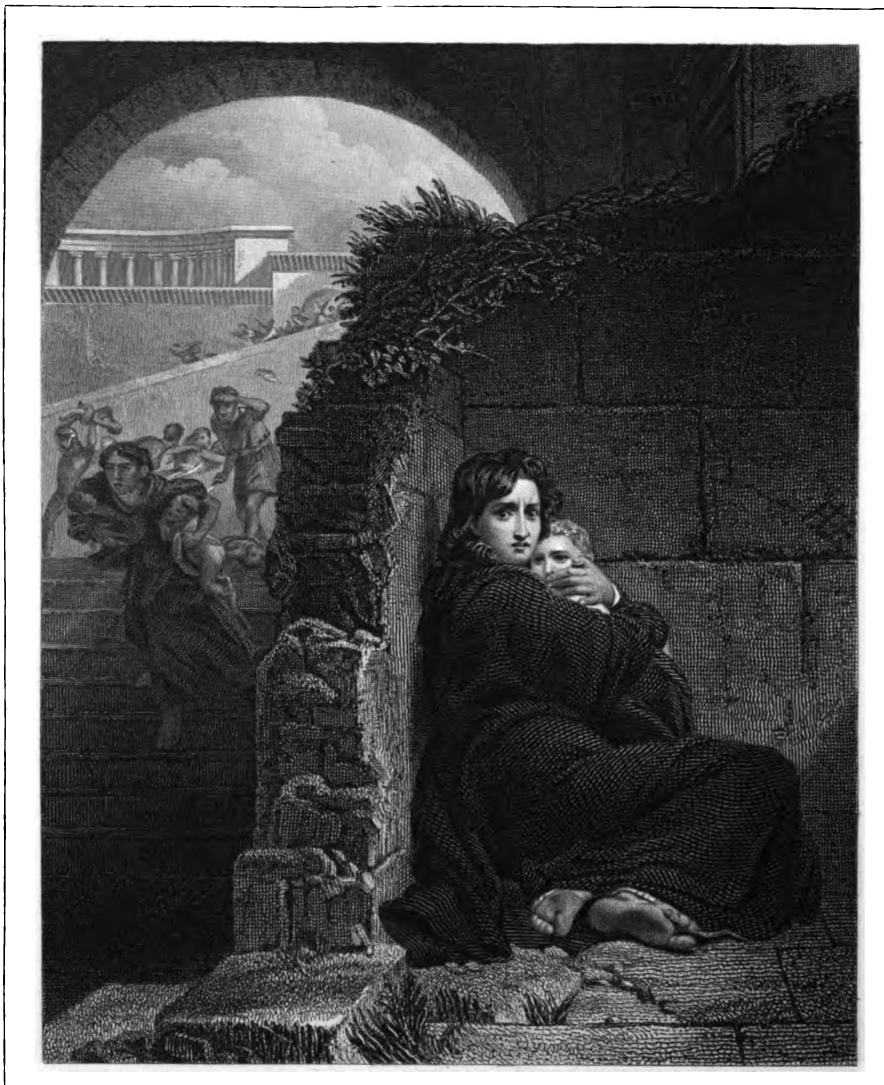
The Virgin, bending over her new-born son, contemplated him with affecting humility and profound tenderness; above them, Joseph bent down his aged head before this adopted son, who was God; a mild ray of the moon shone upon this divine group, enclosed in the red recesses of the rock: without, everything reposed under a fine starlight night.[1]

"Here must be the place," said the shepherds to each other; and prostrating with respect before the manger of the King of kings, they offered to the poor and new-born God the mite and the homage of the poor.

Then they proceeded to relate the apparition of the angels, their ravishing concerts, their words of hope, peace, and love. Joseph admired and wondered at this divine manifestation, and Mary, who heard in silence this simple narrative, laid up every word of it in her heart. When this duty was performed, and their mission ended, the shepherds retired, glorifying God, and spread abroad in the mountains the wonders of that sacred night. Those who heard them, struck with a long fit of amazement, said one to another, "Is it really possible? Are we then in the time of Abraham, that angels should visit shepherds?"

Perhaps it was these recitals, made in the evenings on the borders of the woods, or in the depths of the ravines, while the camels drank together at the solitary spring, which led a tribe of Arabs to consider Mary and the Infant as divinities. The sweet image of the Virgin holding her Son on her knees, was painted on one of the pillars of the Caaba, and solemnly placed in the number of the three hundred and sixty divinities of the three Arabias. In the time of Mahomet it was still to be seen, as the

(1) "The Persians call Christmas night *scheb jaldai*, night bright and luminous, by reason of the descent of the angels."—(D'Herbelot, Bibl. Orientale, t. ii. p. 294.)



L. Cogniet — G. Greatbach

THE MURDER OF THE INNOCENTS.

Arab historians attest.[1] After the massacre of the Holy Innocents, this brave tribe rose up to a man, uttered a long cry of vengeance, and without being overawed by numbers, attacked Herod's son, though he was a vassal and *protégé* of the Romans.[2]

This authentic anecdote, so curious and generally unknown, comes to the support of the supernatural fact recorded by St. Luke, a fact which the deriding philosophers of the school of Voltaire, and the adepts of pantheism,—if possible, still more pagan,—have not failed to banish to the rank of fables. The capricious devotion of these Arabs, who blended idolatry with the worship of the true God before the preaching of the gospel, can be accounted for only in connexion with the knowledge of the miracles of the sacred night of the Nativity.

On the eighth day after his birth, the Son of God was circumcised, and named Jesus, in conformity with the order of his heavenly Father. He must have had a godfather, like all the Israelites, but we are completely ignorant upon whom that honour fell. As to the ceremony of the circumcision, which always took place under the auspices of Elias, who never failed, said the Hebrews, to assist at it invisibly,[3] it took place, according to St. Epiphanius, in the very cave in which Jesus was born, and St. Bernard presumes, with sufficient probability, that St. Joseph was the minister on the occasion.

(1) "El Azraki adduces the ocular testimony of several respectable persons," says Burckhardt, "to prove a remarkable fact, of which, I believe, no mention has hitherto been made: it is that the figure of the Virgin Mary, with the young Aisa (Jesus) on her knees, was sculptured as a divinity upon one of the pillars nearest to the gate of Caaba."—(Burckhardt, Voyage en Arabie, t. i. p. 221.)

(2) This particular circumstance, which confirms the account of the Arab historian, is found recorded in the *Toldos*, a Jewish book, very ancient, and written in a tone of furious animosity against Christianity. We see there that Herod the Great and his son had to sustain a war against the tribe of the desert, who adored *the image of Jesus and Mary his mother*. This tribe attempted to form alliances with several cities of Palestine, and particularly with that of Haï. Now, as the Jews themselves place this event in the lifetime of Herod, it must have been prompted by the massacre of the Innocents, as the aged king survived only one year the birth of our Saviour.

(3) See Basn., liv. vii. c. 10.

Men of the common people, docile to the summons of the angels, had come to adore the infant God in his poor manger, and share with him their black bread and the milk of their goats. A miracle of a higher character, and of much greater renown, conducted shortly after to the same cradle the first fruits of converted Gentiles: the shepherds of Juda had led the way; it was now the turn of sages and kings.

CHAPTER XII.

ADORATION OF THE MAGI.

In the course of the autumn which preceded the birth of Jesus Christ, certain Chaldean Magi, learned in the study of the courses of the stars, discovered a star of the first magnitude, which they recognised by its extraordinary motion and other no less certain signs, as that star of Jacob, long before predicted by Balaam, which was to arise in their horizon at the time of the parturition of the Virgin. According to the ancient traditions of Iran, collected by Abulfarage, Zoroaster—the restorer of the science of the Magi, a learned man, a great astronomer, and well versed, moreover, in the theology of the Hebrews[1]—announced under the first successor of Cyrus, and a short time after the rebuilding of the temple, that a divine infant, called to change the face of the world, would be born of a virgin, pure and immaculate, in the most western region of Asia. He added that a star unknown to their heavens would signalize this remarkable event, and that on its appearance the Magi would themselves bring presents to this young king. Faithful and religious executors of the wishes of Zoroaster, three of the most illustrious wise men of Babylon,[2]

(1) Some have made Zoroaster a disciple of Jeremias; but their times do not correspond; it is more probable that he was a disciple of Daniel.

(2) Men are not agreed as to the country of the Magi; some make them

had no sooner remarked the star, than they sounded the cymbals of departure. Leaving behind them the city of Seleucidæ, with its elegant edifices of palm-tree wood,[1] and Babylon, where the wind of the desert, moaning over immense ruins, seemed to tell to these silent wrecks the sinister oracles of the son of Amos, they left the country of date-palms, and took the sandy road of Palestine. Before them, like the pillar of light which guided the fugitive cohorts of Israel to the desert shores of the Red Sea, moved forward the star of the Messias. This new star, free from those unchangeable laws which rule the starry spheres, had no regular motion proper to itself; sometimes it advanced at the head of the caravan, always following a straight line in the direction of the west; sometimes it remained stationary above the tents pitched for the night, and seemed gently poised on the bosom of the clouds, like an albatross asleep in fields of air: at daybreak it gave the signal for departure, as it had given the one to halt.[2]

At length, the lofty towers of Jerusalem appeared in the distance in the midst of the bare and wild summits of her

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come from the interior of Arabia Felix, others from India, which is not at all probable. The best authorities give them Persia for their country, and this opinion has seemed to us founded in truth. The names Caspar, Melchior, Balthazar, which are attributed to the Magi, are Babylonian. In fact, Babylon, and after its destruction, Seleucia, situated at a short distance, were the abode of the most celebrated astronomers of antiquity. Finally, these cities are to the east of Jerusalem, and in twenty days' march one may travel from the borders of the Euphrates to Bethlehem. Origen, who was learned and well informed, assures us that the Magi studied astrology. Drexelius ridicules Origen for this very unreasonably; which proves that he was little versed in the history of the East in olden times, where every astronomer was also an astrologer.

(1) Strabo, lib. xvii.

(2) S. Joan. Chrysost., Serm. 6 in S. Matt.—Chalcidius, a pagan philosopher, who lived at the end of the third century, makes mention of this star, and of the sages of the East whom it conducted to the cradle of Jesus Christ. St. Augustin, the doctor of doctors, speaks thus on this subject: "At his birth, he declared a new star, who, when put to death, darkened the old sun. What was that star which never appeared before among the stars, nor remained to be pointed out afterwards? What was it but a magnificent tongue of the heavens—to declare the glory of God, to proclaim with unusual brightness the unheard-of parturition of the Virgin."—(Serm. cci., in Epiph. iii.)

mountains; the camels and the mares were quenching their thirst at a cistern by the way-side, when the Magi uttered a cry of surprise and affright; the star had just hidden itself in the heights of the sky, like an intelligent creature aware of some impending danger.[1]

As much disconcerted as the navigators of ancient times when a barrier of black clouds concealed from them the polar star, the Magi consulted together for a moment. What was the meaning of the sudden disappearance of their brilliant guide? Were they then at the end of their long journey, and should they set up the tent of abode? That the infant king whom they came to adore from the banks of the Tigris should be found at Jerusalem, was a thing both possible and probable. "The *God of heaven*," they thought, "does not prolong his miracles in vain; they cease when human agency suffices: this is all in right order. What if the star has left us? We can very well, without its aid, find him whom we seek in the capital of his dominions. To discover the cradle of the young King Messias, we have only to enter the first street strewed with green boughs, perfumed with essence of roses, and carpeted with drapery of rich colours embroidered with gold; the sound of the harps of the Hebrews, their dances, and their songs of joy, will sufficiently indicate to us in what direction to proceed." Then urging on their animals, they passed the gate of the enclosure, and entered the ancient Sion between two files of barbarian soldiers.

The aspect of Jerusalem was sad: its population, weakened and silent, had no appearance of joy or festivity; groups only formed here and there, to see the travellers pass by, whom they recognised by their long white robes, fastened by magnificent oriental girdles, and their *bazubends*[2] enriched with precious stones, and, above all, by the manly beauty of their features, as

(1) This cistern, or well, situated on the road to Jerusalem, still bears the name of the *Cistern of the three Kings*, or *of the Star*, in memory of this event.

(2) Bazubends, antique bracelets of diamonds, turquoises, and pearls, which the satraps wore above the elbow; the King of Persia and his sons still wear the bazubends.—(See Morier, Voyage en Perse et en Armenie.)

satraps of the great king. As they went along, the oriental cavaliers, leaning down upon the necks of their dromedaries, asked some of the numerous spectators who crowded the way, where was the new-born King of the Jews, whose star they had seen in Babylon. The people of Jerusalem, looking at one another in amazement, knew not what to answer to this inquiry. . . . . A King of the Jews! . . . . What king? They knew none but Herod, whom they abhorred from the bottom of their souls, and who had no infant son. The Magi, astonished on their part that all whom they interrogated should protest their ignorance, and seeing moreover around them no signs of festivity, moved in consternation up the crowded street which led to the ancient palace of David, and pitched their tents in its ruinous and shaded courts.

Nevertheless, the appearance of these grandees of Persia, who travelled very rarely at that time in the mountains of Judea, their startling questions, which astonished and intimidated at the same time a people whom the vast system of espionage organized by Herod[1] held in fear, soon put into commotion the most seditious and restless city of the East. The name of King Messias, pronounced by the Pharisees, ever on the alert to make the aged monarch uneasy about the future fortunes of his house and the duration of his own power, fell among the curious groups like a spark upon thatch. The King Messias? It was emancipation! It was conquest! It was glory! It was the banner of Juda waving like a ruler over the vanquished world! The Persian satraps passed for the first astrologers in the world;[2] they had, no doubt, read in the stars the birth of the Hebrew *Goel.*[3] The heir of the kings of Juda was about to reascend the great throne of his ancestors, and drive from it the race of the Herods, those *half-Jews*, who were the slaves of Rome! A low rumour, like that

(1) See Josephus, Ant. Jud., lib. xv. c. 13.

(2) The whole of the East at that time believed in astrology; and Philo informs us that the satraps of Persia passed for the first astrologers in the world.

(3) *Goel* (Saviour), one of the names by which the Hebrews designated the Messias.

which precedes the tempests of the ocean, soon circulated in the houses, in the streets, on the public places; never had the Jews of Jerusalem felt less disposed to conform to the royal edict, which forbade them *to meddle with any affairs but their own.*[1] In vain did the fierce soldiers of Herod line the ramparts and platforms of the towers; the people were strong; they had no more fear, and they conspired in the street. "All Jerusalem was troubled," says the gospel, and it was soon the tyrant's turn to be troubled also.

Herod at that time was living in his palace at Jerusalem, the gardens of which—full of flowers, stocked with rare birds, and intersected with clear streams, which lost themselves beneath the branches of an actual little forest[2]—could not avert his mind from the gloomy recollections and sinister anticipations which rendered life an annoyance to him. Informed by the chief of his spies of the arrival of the Magi, and of their strange discourses, his broad forehead, wrinkled with anxious thoughts, darkened like a stormy sky, and his uneasiness was visible to every one.

The trouble of the King of the Jews is easily understood and explained by his position. Herod was neither the anointed of the Lord, nor the choice of the people; a branch of laurel, gathered in the idolatrous precincts of the Capitol, formed his tributary crown,—a crown of vassalage, entwined with thorns, every leaf of which had been paid for with heaps of gold abstracted from the savings of the rich and the indigence of the poor. Hated by the rich, whose heads he cut off at the first suspicion—feared by his relatives, whose tombs he tragically filled up—the horror of the priests, whose privileges he had trampled under foot—detested by the people for his doubtful religion and his foreign extraction—he could only oppose his courtiers, his

(1) Herod had strictly forbidden the Jews to talk of affairs of state; they could not even meet together in family parties to make great feasts, according to custom. His spies, scattered about Jerusalem, and even over the high roads, immediately arrested those who disobeyed the king's edict; they were placed secretly, and sometimes in open day, in strongholds where they were severely punished.—(Josephus, Antiq. Jud., lib. xv. c. 13.)

(2) Josephus, de Bello, lib. v. c. 13.

assassins, his artists, and the opulent but small sect of Herodians, who were fascinated with his magnificence, to the active, ardent, and openly declared hatred of the rest of the nation. Often was the friend of Cæsar insulted to his face by his obstinate subjects: the Pharisees, an artful and powerful sect, had refused with insult and derision to take the oath of fidelity to him; the Essenians, whose courage in battle rendered them formidable, had followed the example of the Pharisees; and the young and ebullient disciples of the doctors of the law had recently thrown down in open day, with their vengeful axes, the golden eagle which he had placed above the gate of the temple to please the Romans.

On every side plots, secretly favoured by his nearest and dearest relatives, were contrived in the dark against his life, and he was very near falling, in the crowded theatre, beneath the poniards of certain young high-minded men, who thought to do a deed of virtue and patriotism, by ridding the earth of a prince who reigned like a madman.[1] Attributing this unusual daring to the contempt inspired by his old age, he exhausted all the secrets of art to appear young again.[2] He would fain have persuaded himself and others, that he was still that young and brilliant Herod who surpassed the greater part of the Hebrews in gymnastic exercises: Herod, the bold rider, the expert hunter, the handsome and disdainful monarch, who had despised the love of that celebrated Queen of Egypt for whom Anthony had lost the empire of the world. But, alas! the silvery network which began to mix with the black hair of his sons, their impatience to reign, the spirit of revolt and mutiny which crept in among the people, and the insolence of the banditti who re-commenced their depredations in Galilee, made him understand but too well that his reign drew near its

(1) The people were so far from applauding the discovery of this conspiracy, and rejoicing at the safety of the king, that they seized the informer who had disclosed it, tore him in pieces, and had him eaten up by dogs.—(Josephus, Ant. Jud., lib. xv. c. 11.)

(2) Herod painted in order to look younger than he was, and had his hair and beard dyed black.—(Ibid., lib. xvi. c. 11.)

end. Tormented with suspicions, and distrustful even of his spies, he wandered about, sometimes at night alone and in disguise, in the streets and public places of his capital:[1] there he heard with his own ears the muttered imprecations, the cruel reproaches, the bitter railleries which fell upon "the man without ancestors," the "Ascalonite," the "wild beast," who had killed his innocent wife,—a pearl of beauty, a model of honour,—and who had afterwards had his two sons by her strangled, those two princes so sad, so handsome, so brave, whom the people loved for the sake of the Asmonean heroes, their ancestors, and their unfortunate mother. The day after these nocturnal wanderings was a day of mourning and punishments: none were spared. The executioner, after cutting off the heads of the highest, fell upon the lowest of the rabble. Thus on every side vows were made against the life of the prince; and each time that the report of his death was circulated, whether by chance or design, in the distant provinces, the people, greedily seizing the treacherous bait which flattered their hatred, hastened to light up bonfires in every direction, which Herod extinguished with blood.

Amidst these elements of civil discord,—when a fever of insurrection was sullenly working its way in the army, and revolt, like a ripe fruit, seemed to invite the hand of the seditious,—strangers of high bearing arrive at Jerusalem, who inquire without any mystery or circumlocution, for a new-born King of the Jews, whose star they have seen. Herod is astonished; he anxiously calls up his recollections; the predictions fatal to his dynasty which the Pharisees cause to be circulated—the oracles of the ancient seers—to which he has hitherto lent but a distracted and secondary attention, come to his remembrance. This warrior Messias, this prophet sprung from David, who is to carry his victorious ensigns from from west to east, begins to give him vague disquietude; it is not the God who makes the aged king

(1) He often mixed at night, in disguise, with the populace, says Josephus, to know what opinion the people had of him, and he punished without mercy those who did not approve of what he did.—(Josephus, Ant. Jud., lib. xv. c. 13.)

so full of thought, it is the prince. The more he thinks upon it, the more this mysterious event seems to him connected with one vast conspiracy tending to raise up a secret and rival power upon the ruins of his own. What then! did he pour out like water the illustrious blood of the Macchabees, without any concern for the beating hearts of his wife and children; did he crush beneath the iron wheels of his despotism all that offered any resistance; lose his soul, his honour, the rest of his nights, in which his bleeding victims troubled his dreams[1] . . . . and all this to what purpose?—to smoothen the way to the throne for the family of David![2] . . . . This sceptre so dearly purchased,—this sceptre, still wet with the blood of his own relatives, will be then no more than a reed, sterile and accursed, which the blast of death shall break over his tomb! . . . . He will have passed, like the meteor of a stormy night, over this land, whose ancient glory will brilliantly revive after him! . . . . . And this people, who hated him with a hatred so strong, so deadly, so furious, that even his favours could do nothing towards assuaging it, how will they surround with their love and sympathy the offspring of their ancient kings! And this last thought fell as bitter as wormwood upon the dark and desolate heart of the aged monarch; for in the midst of his acts of violence, he felt the want of being loved, a strange want certainly, but perfectly real in this exceptional being, who seemed made up of contrasts, and who had employed very noble qualities in the service of the most absorbing and most cruel passion which could lay waste the human soul—ambition!

"Be this child prince of the land or prophet of God," said

(1) Josephus, Ant. Jud., lib. v. c. 13.

(2) We wonder at the alarm caused to Herod by an offshoot of the family of David; yet it was not only Herod that persecuted that noble family, out of hatred for its ancient rights and glorious expectations. Eusebius, after Hegesippus, relates that, after the conquest of Jerusalem, Vespasian commanded the posterity of David to be sought out and destroyed. Under Trajan, the persecution still continued. Finally, Domitian had two descendants of that illustrious race brought to Rome, whose grandfather was the apostle St. Jude. The emperor, after interrogating them, learning that they possessed no more than thirty-nine acres of land, which they cultivated with their own hands, sent them back to their own country, being made easy as to their ambition by their poverty.

Herod, after a pause, "he must die; . . . . and die he shall, even though I were sure to extinguish with this feeble spark all the glories which our *seers* dream of for future times. Athalia. that clever woman, who knew how to reign, forgot only one infant in his cradle in the massacre of the royal family of Juda. That child deprived her of her throne and her life. I will take care to forget nothing. But where is this *new-born* king of the Jews concealed, who is proclaimed by the stars, and whom these insolent satraps come to seek at the very gates of my palace? Can he be in reality the *Shiloh* foretold by Jacob? These are perhaps mere reveries of the astrologers? No matter, we must make sure." A few hours after, the doctors of the law and the chief priests, assembled in council under the presidency of Herod, heard this question, which appeared to them strange in the mouth of such a prince: "Do you know in what place the Messias should be born?"

The answer, which was not expected, was unanimous: "*In Bethlehem of Juda.*" And the ancients of Israel, delighted to make the friend of the Romans uneasy, did not fail to add that, as the last of the weeks of Daniel was near its end, the time for the Messias was drawing near. These indications, little calculated to give security, were not sufficient for Herod, who wanted to know where to strike the blow: he resolved to interrogate the Magi, and to know, if possible, the precise time of the birth of the child, calculated by that of the appearance of the star. Too clever a politician to grant a public audience to the sages of Iran, which would have given consistency to a rumour which it was his interest to stifle, the king sent for them privately, and pressed them with questions as to the time of the star's appearing to them. "He inquires," says St. John Chrysostom, "not the time of the child, but of the star, lying in wait for his prey with great diligence." Informed of what he wished to know, the man of blood dismissed the strangers in an affable and gracious manner. "Go," said he, "to Bethlehem, and search diligently after the child, and when you have found him, bring me word again, that I also may come and adore him."

Now the Magi, like all superior men, like all the sons of meditation and science, were good, sincere, and little inclined to suspect evil. They understood arbitrary conduct and cruelty in a prince, they did not understand falsehood; for the first thing that the kings of Persia taught their children was to tell the truth. Accordingly they believed the false words of the Idumean, and passing again beneath the elegant porticoes of this palace, which vied in magnificence with those of the great king, but which had not in the midst of its bronzes and arcades the golden bell of the *suppliants*,[1] they left the Betzetha,[2] struck their tents, and traversed a second time the holy city, to go to the presumed birthplace of the Messias. As they passed by the walls of the new amphitheatre, enriched with trophies,—the extraordinary decoration of which was an inexhaustible subject of sarcasms to the Pharisees,—they met King Herod, surrounded by a forest of Thracian and German lances, who was going in the direction of Jericho.[3]

The Persians left Jerusalem by the gate of Damascus; then taking the left, they entered upon valleys intersected with hills, which they were obliged to climb. They were about an hour's journey from the capital of Judea, and were watering their camels

(1) The kings of Persia administered justice in a manner quite patriarchal. They had above their heads a golden bell, and to this bell was attached a chain, the end of which hung outside of the palace. Every time that the bell rung, the officers of the prince left his apartments, and introduced before the *great king* the petitioners, who demanded justice of the prince himself, and the king rendered it to them on the spot with equity.—(Antar, translated from the Arabic by Terrick Hamilton.)

(2) The quarter called *Betzetha*, or the new town, which Herod had joined to Jerusalem, was situated to the north of the temple: it included the lower pool, the probatical pool, and the palace of Herod.

(3) We have followed the authors who maintain that Herod departed for Jericho, where he was for some time sick, at the time when the Magi journeyed to Bethlehem; this agrees every way with the account of the gospel; for if Herod had been at Jerusalem at the time when the Persians returned, they would probably have seen him before the admonition of the angel, who did not inform them of the designs of the king till the first night. The sickness of Herod, taking off his attention from the Magi and the infant, left the former at liberty to return peaceably into their country, and the Holy Family time to return by the road to Nazareth.

at a cistern, when a brilliant light appeared directly over them, and descended rapidly to them, like a falling star. "The star! our star!" cried out the slaves, transported with joy. "The star!" repeated their masters, with the same rapture; and being certain this time that they had entered on the right way, they resumed their journey with fresh ardour.

They were about to enter the city of David, when the star, lowering itself towards the south, stopped all at once over a cave, which had the appearance of being a rustic stable, and descending as low as possible in the air, rested, as it were, over the head of the infant God. The sight of this motionless star,—the softest rays of which fell in a luminous sheaf upon this cave hollowed out of the rock,—filled the Magi with great faith, and their faith indeed needed to be great to acknowledge the King Messias, in an infant destitute of everything, lodged in a poor place, laid in a manger, and whose mother, though beautiful and full of every grace, was evidently of a very obscure condition.

God, who would make the Jews ashamed of the hardness of their hearts, by setting before them the religious eagerness and the docile faith of infidels, permitted that the extraordinary humiliation of the Holy Family should not shake the firm belief of the Magi.

The worshippers of the sun, the Gentiles, whom the cross came to save, as well as the children of promise, made their way into the sorry abode of Christ with as much veneration as in their temples built over subterranean fires, where starry spheres revolved.[1] According to the custom of their people, they put some of the dust of that poor threshold on their foreheads, and after taking off their rich sandals, they adored the new-born Infant, as every son of the East at that time adored his gods and his masters. Then opening caskets of odoriferous wood, which contained the presents intended for the Messias, they took out of

(1) These spheres, composed of circles of gold, cut out like those of our armillary spheres, revolve brilliantly at the rising of the sun. They are still seen at Oulam, where the Ghebers have a temple.—(Rabbi Benjamin.)

them most pure gold, found in the environs of Ninive the Great, and perfumes which were exchanged for fruits and pearls with the Arabs of the Yemen. These mysterious gifts had nothing carnal about them, like the offerings of the Jews. The cradle of HIM who came to abolish the sacrifices of the synagogue was not to be sprinkled with blood; therefore the Magi did not sacrifice to him lambs without spot, nor white heifers; they presented him gold, as to a prince of the earth, myrrh, and frankincense, as to a God;[1] then, touching the earth with their foreheads before Mary, whom they found fair "as the moon, and humble as the flower of *nenuphar*," they invoked upon her the benedictions of God, and wished that "the hand of woe might never reach her."

This was the last scene of splendour in which the Blessed Virgin bore a part. The first period of her life, like a sweet dream of Ginnistan, had passed beneath roofs of cedar and gold, in the midst of sacred perfumes, melodious chants, the sound of lyres and harps; the second, full of wonders and mysteries, had placed her in correspondence with the inhabitants of heaven and the princes of Asia; the third was about to open under other auspices: it was the turn of persecutions, troubles, and indescribable sorrows.

And now the Magi, whom nothing retained in Judea, prepared to leave Bethlehem. They proposed, according to their promise, to go and find the king in his palace of Jericho, to tell him where the Messias was; but the angel of the Lord admonished them, in a dream, of the dark designs of that perfidious prince, and intimated to them the order to change their route. The children of Ormuzd returned their thanks to the "Master of the sun and of the morning star," gave the honour of this nocturnal revelation to their good genius,[2] and meriting by their perfect

(1) Those verses of Juvencus, the most ancient of Christian poets whose works have come down to us, on the presents of the kingly Magi, have been justly praised:—

"Aurum, thus, myrrham, regique, Deoque, hominique
Dona ferunt. . . ."

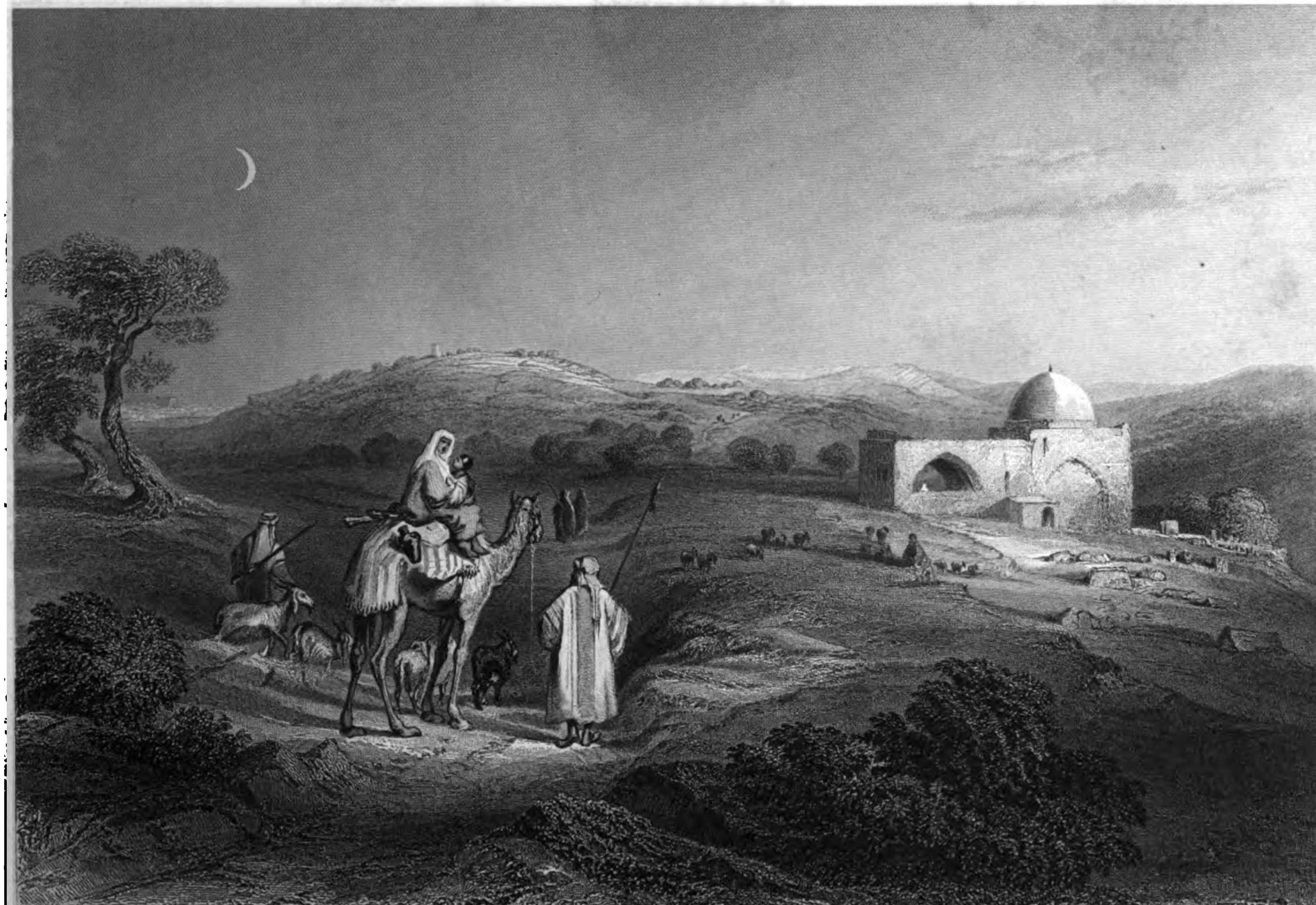
(2) Of Ormuzd, in Zend, *ahurô-mazdao* (the very learned king), and of

docility the gift of faith which they received later on,[1] instead of going along the sterile and dangerous borders of the accursed lake which reflects in its heavy and stagnant waters the shadows of the reprobate cities, they turned the heads of their camels towards the Great Sea, and imagined themselves in the plains planted with date-trees[2] and covered with roses, bathed by the Euphrates and the Bend-Emyr, while they were traversing the fine regions of Syria.

Ahriman, in Zend, *ahyro-maingus* (the intelligent merchant), according to the Persian mythology, were born the good and evil genii to whom are attributed different functions in the universe, whether for the diffusion of good or the propagation of evil. One of these good genii, named Serosch, went round the earth every night to watch for the security of the servants of Ormuzd.—(See the Amschaspand-Named, and The Book of Kings of Firdousi.)

(1) Very ancient authors affirm that the Magi received baptism from St. Thomas; it is thought that they suffered martyrdom in India, where they preached the gospel.

(2) "The palm-trees of Babylonia," says Diodorus Siculus, "bear exquisite dates; they are half a foot long, some yellow, others red, and others of a purple colour, so that they are no less agreeable to the sight than to the taste. The trunk of the tree is of an astonishing height, and everywhere alike straight and smooth; but the head, or tuft, is not of the same form in all. Some palm-trees spread out their branches in a circle, and the fruit of some projects in bunches from the bark, which is open about midway; others bear their branches on one side only, and their weight bending them down towards the ground, gives them the figure of a lamp suspended; others, in fine, divide their branches into two portions, and let them fall to the right and to the left in perfect symmetry." (Diodorus, b. ii.) The following is the description of the banks of the Euphrates, by a poet anterior to Mahomet: "They saw populous towns, plains abounding in flowing streams, date-trees, and warbling birds, and sweet smelling flowers; and the country appeared like a blessing to enliven the sorrowing heart; and the camels were grazing and straying about the land; and they were of various colours, like the flowers of a garden."—(Antar, translated from the Arabic, by Terrick Hamilton.)—For the fields and gardens of roses so common in ancient Persia, see Firdousi, The Book of Kings.


W. H. Bartlett. S. Bradshaw.

Rachel's Tomb, near Bethlehem.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PURIFICATION.

FORTY days after the birth of our Saviour, the Virgin considered it her duty to repair to Jerusalem, to obey the precept of Leviticus, which prescribed the purification of mothers, and the ransom of the first-born. Doubtless this law did not oblige Mary; for if she had been a mother for our Redeemer, she had remained a virgin for herself, and her conception without stain had been followed by a parturition without defilement; "but she submitted voluntarily, for an example to the world, to a penal law to which she was only so far subject," says Bossuet, "as her virginal maternity was unknown."

Poorly equipped, and lost in the crowd on their first appearance upon the dusty road of Ephrata, Joseph and Mary, who had not attracted any notice, had not either left behind them those long recollections which pass into tradition among nations. It was different on their return to Jerusalem; thanks, no doubt, to the miraculous recitals of the shepherds, and the brilliant visit of the Magi. At some distance from Bethlehem, Mary rested beneath a turpentine-tree to give the breast to her divine Infant, and this tree, according to the common belief, had from that time a hidden virtue which effected, during sixteen centuries, a multitude of wonderful cures. This, at least, is related by the Christians of Asia and the Turks, to whom this tree was still, two centuries ago, an object of veneration and a term of pilgrimage.[1]

After this halt, the memory of which is preserved, the holy spouses arrived at the tomb of Rachel,[2] where every Hebrew was

(1) This tree, under which Mary rested to give Jesus the breast, was destroyed during the century before the last, but the memory of the place where it was is still preserved.

(2) According to the Jewish doctors, Jacob buried his beloved wife on the road to Bethlehem, only because his prophetic knowledge led him to discover

bound to pray as he passed. This tumulus of primitive times, which was composed of twelve great stones eaten by moss, upon each of which was read the name of a tribe of Israel, had no epitaph but a white rose of Syria; sweet and frail emblem of the beauty of that young woman, who faded at the moment when she had just blossomed, like the flower spoken of by Job. As they stopped to say the prayer for the dead over the revered dust of one of the saints of their nation, the Virgin and Joseph little thought that the plaintive cries of the dove, which the scripture attributes to this fair Assyrian, would so soon be applicable; and that the mother of Joseph and Benjamin was the desolate type of mothers who would bewail, some days afterwards, upon the mountains of Judea, their children massacred instead of Jesus Christ.

On leaving the valley of Rephaim, whose old oaks overshadowed the grassy tombs of the giants of the race of Enac, the Virgin perceived a tree of a forbidding aspect, the sight of which afflicted her heart. It was a barren olive-tree, which spread its pale foliage to the breezes of the night, and the mournful noise of which resembled the moaning of some human being. As she passed under its melancholy branches, which no bird of heaven enlivened with its song, Mary felt that sensation of poisonous cold diffused by the fatal shade of the manchineel-tree. This tree, if the local tradition was not mistaken, was the "infamous" wood on which Christ was nailed.[1]

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that a portion of his descendants would follow this road as captives of the Assyrians, and because he wished that Rachel might intercede for them to Jehovah, as they passed before her tomb. The Protestants have declaimed strongly against the Talmudists on account of this passage, which favours the intercession of the Virgin and of the saints. This tomb of Rachel was in such veneration, that all the Jews who passed by it made it a religious duty to engrave their names on one of the stones: these enormous stones were twelve in number.—(Talm. de Jer.) We know that the tears of Rachel, spoken of by Jeremias, were only a figure of the tears shed by the Jewish women after the massacre of the Innocents.—(St. Matt. xi. 17, 18.)

(1) At the distance of half a league from Jerusalem is found the monastery of the Holy Cross. In the church of this monastery is shown the place where stood the barren olive-tree, which the men of Jerusalem used to make the cross

At the very moment when Joseph and Mary made their way into the second enclosure, with the sicles of silver for the ransom and the doves for sacrifice, a holy old man, named Simeon,[1] to whom it had been divinely revealed that he should not die till he had seen Christ the Lord, came into the portico by inspiration of the Spirit of God. At the sight of the Holy Family, the eye of the just man became inspired; discovering the King Messias beneath the poor swaddling-clothes of the people, he took him from the arms of his mother, lifted him up to his face, and began to contemplate him with emotion, while tears of joy rolled down his venerable cheeks. "Now," cried out the pious old man, raising up his streaming eyes to heaven, "now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word, in peace; because my eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people: a light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." As he finished these words, Simeon solemnly blessed the holy pair; and then addressing himself to Mary, after a mournful and grave silence, he added that this child, born for the ruin and resurrection of many in Israel, would be a sign of contradiction to men, and that sorrow should pierce the soul of his mother like the sharp point of a sword.

By this unexpected light, which shed a sombre gleam over the great destiny of Christ, the ignominies, the sufferings, and agonies of the cross, were disclosed at once to the Blessed Virgin. The inauspicious words of Simeon, like a stormy wind, made her bend down her head, and her heart was painfully oppressed.[2] But Mary knew how to accept, without complaint and without murmur,

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of our Lord. The place where the trunk of the olive-tree was is now occupied by a marble-stone, which is at the bottom of a small niche beneath the high altar, where a lamp burns perpetually.

(1) The Arabs give Simeon the title of *Siddik* (he who verifies), because he bore witness to the coming of the true Messias, in the person of Jesus, the son of Mary, whom all Mussulmans are obliged to receive as such.—(D'Herb., Biblioth. Orientale, t. iii. p. 266.)

(2) "Mary, my sovereign," says St. Anselm on this subject, "I cannot believe that you could have lived a moment with such sorrow, had not God strengthened you, who gives life."

all that came to her from God; her pale lips were placed upon this chalice of wormwood and gall; she drained it even to the dregs, and then said, sweetly, as she dried up her tears, "O Lord, thy will be done!" At that moment the daughter of Abraham was exalted above the head and father of her people; she too sacrificed her son upon the altar of the Lord, but she had the sad assurance that the sacrifice would be accepted,—and *she was a mother!*

She was still pondering in her mind these deep thoughts, when a prophetess came in, named Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser, who was far advanced in years. This holy widow departed not from the temple, by fastings and prayers serving God night and day. At the sight of the divine Infant, she began to praise the Lord aloud, and to speak of him to those who looked for the redemption of Israel.

"Not only," says St. Ambrose on this subject, "does the generation of the Lord receive testimony from angels, and prophets, and shepherds, but also from the aged and the just. Every age, and both sexes, and the miracles of events attest it. A Virgin brings forth, one that was barren becomes a mother, the dumb speaks, Elizabeth prophesies, the Magian adores, he who is shut up in the womb leaps for joy, the widow proclaims, the just expects."

As the farthest court of the temple was forbidden to Mary, and as the infant, on account of his sex, was to be offered there to the Lord, Joseph himself carried him into the *court of the first-born*, asking himself at the same time whether the scenes which had taken place at the entrance of Jesus into the holy house would be renewed in the compartment of the Hebrew priests. But nothing discovered the infant God in this privileged part of the temple; everything there remained sad and frozen beneath the rising ray of the young Sun of justice. A priest unknown to Joseph received in a desultory manner from the rough hands of the man of the people, whom he regarded as the "offscouring of the world,"[1] the timid birds ordained by the law,

(1) Prideaux, History of the Jews.



Rembrandt [illegible]

THE [illegible]

and did not even deign to honour Christ with a single look. The love of gold—that shameful idolatry, which hides its unacknowledged worship in the shade as long as it retains enough shame to blush—had changed into hard stone the narrow, egotistical, and malignant heart[1] of the princes of the synagogue. Leaving the monopoly of labour and privations to the simple Levites, whom they reduced to live upon herbs and dried figs,[2] they passed by the poor man stretched upon their marble thresholds, and the traveller wounded in the mountain pathway, turning their heads away with indifference; in reality they loved neither God nor men. And with this does our Lord, who HIMSELF instituted a priesthood exclusively of charity, reproach them, with holy and piercing irony, in the parable of the Samaritan. Therefore, as Malachy had announced, "God cursed their benedictions," and turned away his face from their temple, which he was soon to deliver up to the sword and fire of the Romans.

The presence of the Messias, who inflamed the heart of the disciples at Emmaus, even before they had recognised their Master in the breaking of bread, beamed upon the soul of the Aaronites, as the ray of spring glistens on the eternal snows of Ararat. That solemn moment, which suspended the sacred concerts round the throne of God, and fixed the eyes of the heavenly host on a single point of the universe, that moment announced by Aggeus, when the glory of the second temple effaced that of the first, passed unperceived before the darkened eyes of the priests and doctors. None of them recognised "the pure and never sullied oblation" which Malachy had predicted.

(1) The Jewish doctors had then, and still have, a maxim which fills us with horror: they hold that he who does not nourish his hatred, and avenge himself, is unworthy of the name of rabbin.—(Basn., liv. vi. c. 17.)

(2) The luxury and avarice of the chief priests of Jerusalem were incredible. The pontiffs sent people into the country to take the tithes in the granaries, and appropriate them to themselves, which left the inferior priests to die of hunger. At the least remonstrance, the miserable Levites were accused of revolt and insubordination, and delivered up to the Romans: the governor Felix alone cast forty of them into prison, out of complaisance to the doctors and princes of the synagogue.—(Josephus, Vita.)

The desired of nations, HE whose way had been prepared by angels, the great Redeemer so long promised and expected, was there bodily present, in his holy house, and no one thought to welcome him with palms, crying out upon the battlements of the temple and the roofs of Jerusalem, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" They knew well, says the gospel, how to prognosticate the approach of rain by the clouds which gathered in the west; they knew well how to foresee heat when the south wind blew; but these men, so skilful in drawing presages from the different aspects of the sky, did not see "that the fig-tree of Solomon was about to put forth its figs,"[1] and the child of the people did not lead them to presage the God. O poverty, how excellent a disguise art thou, even for the divine nature! The true CHRIST was in the midst of his own; but he was poor, and his own received him not: therefore have they remained without a Saviour; for no *Melech-Hamaschiak* has come to justify their incredulous contempt for the divine Son of the Virgin, and they are on this account reduced to say, with cold and despairing rage, "Perish those who calculate the time of the Messias!"[2]

Meanwhile the infant God, who had recognised as he passed through the streets of Jerusalem the sites of our redemption, counted his executioners in silence in this grave and glittering assemblage; among the choirs who sung to the harp hymns of praise to the Eternal, CHRIST distinguished the arrogant and malevolent voices which should cry out later on, "Crucify him! crucify him!"

Race of Aaron, where art thou now? The avenging breath of the Crucified has scattered thee like chaff in every part of the globe; absorbed in those masses which thou despisedst, the companions of thy exile no longer know thee! But at that time, little troubled about that future which was lowering over their heads, the Hebrew priests offered to the God who rejected them the chosen victims of the great and of the common people. One

(1) St. Luc., c. 12, v. 55 et 56, et c. xxii. v. 29, 30.
(2) Basn., liv. vi. c. 26. Talmud, 349.

of them took the doves from Joseph, mounted the gentle ascent of the altar of holocausts, and offered to the Lord this poor and simple sacrifice.

"And after they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord," says St. Luke, "they returned into Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth."[1]

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

Scarcely had they returned into Lower Galilee, when Joseph and Mary had to depart again for a long and perilous journey, the end of which was the land of exile. One night, "an angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph, saying, Arise, and take the Child and his Mother, and fly into Egypt; and be there until I shall tell thee. For it will come to pass that Herod will seek the Child to destroy him." At these words, Joseph, affrighted, rises up, adores the Lord, and runs to awaken Mary, who was sleeping the sweet and gentle sleep of angels by the cradle of her infant. The young mother has quickly understood the necessity of this prompt and stealthy departure. She looks upon her son full of anguish; hastily gets together some provisions, some swaddling clothes, some garments which they need in their

(1) We have followed the opinion of St. Luke, St. John Chrysostom, and some other authorities, in making the Holy Family leave for Nazareth after the Purification. This is the only way to reconcile St. Matthew—who says nothing of the marvellous events of the Presentation in the temple—with St. Luke, who is silent on the massacre of the Innocents and the flight into Egypt. "What then shall we say?" says St. John Chrysostom, "that St. Luke calls this the time, describing that which preceded the descent into Egypt. For he did not lead them thither before the Purification, lest the law should be in any way infringed; but he waited till the Purification should be accomplished, and they should have returned to Nazareth, and then they were to go down into Egypt."—(Hom. ix. in St. Matt.)

flight; and then, preceded by Joseph, and carrying Jesus in her arms, she departs from her native city, where all reposes in the brightness of the stars of night.

The prophecies of Simeon had soon been verified. Scarcely was he born, when the persecution of a tyrant came to seek Jesus in the cradle; and his mother, so pure, so young, so holy, was forced to fly during the night, like a criminal, in company with a man with grey hairs, who could oppose only patience and prayer to the spear of the Arab lying in ambush in the defiles of the mountains, or to the murderous pursuit of the soldiers of Herod: and one would have said that God himself abandoned this Holy Family to its fate; for, on intimating to Joseph the order to depart, his messenger had not promised, as the angel Raphael formerly did to the young traveller to Rages, to guard them from all evil during the journey. The spouse of the Virgin understood that, the solemn time for the manifestation of CHRIST not being come, it was the will of God to preserve him from the snares of Herod by means resulting from mere human prudence. On Joseph then devolved all the care and honour of this difficult undertaking,—on him, a man of the common people, poor and obscure, devolved the care of overturning the plans, escaping the plots, and surprising the suspicious vigilance of a distrustful tyrant, artful, and served by his emissaries as a despot in the East. What would become of them, and what should they do, if they had any fatal encounter on the road to Jerusalem? The abrupt departure of the Magi had alarmed the suspicions of Herod, and these suspicions were strengthened by the words of Anna and Simeon; secret inquiries, silent investigations, already began, and no one could tell where the sanguinary prince would stop, who dropped gold in profusion into the red hands of the murderer. The more deeply Joseph pondered, the more his thoughts brought up some horrible measure, the vague terror of which stagnated the blood in his veins. Mary, for her part, pale and silent as death, cast about her timid looks into the hollows of the valleys, the depths of the forests, or the long extent of the solitary windings of the rocky and difficult path, which Joseph



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had chosen as the surest and most secluded from the habitations of men. The moon lighted with its soft and velvet beams this silent march, enveloped by a fine oriental night in its azure veil.

"It was still the cold season,"[1] says St. Bonaventure, "and, in traversing Palestine, the Holy Family had to choose the most rugged and desert tracks. Where shall they lodge during the nights? What place shall they be able to choose during the day, to rest a little from the fatigue of the journey? Where shall they take the frugal repast, to recruit their strength?"[2]

Tradition is silent as to a great part of this affecting and perilous journey. No doubt, the holy travellers made long and painful marches across the mountains, taking advantage of the earliest hours of daylight, and often waiting, too, for the rising of the moon to proceed on their way. As long as they were passing through Galilee, the deep caverns which are sunk in it, caverns of unknown windings, where it is easy to hide from all observation, afforded them a place to stop and repose: but these dens with hollow sides had their dangers too; for numerous and predatory bands, who had long defied all the forces of the kingdom, and who were emboldened to reappear by the sickness of Herod,[3] chose them by preference for their places of security. The fear of penetrating unconsciously into one of these resorts of assassins must have made Joseph hesitate more than once at the sheltering openings of these isolated caverns.

At length, after a thousand inconveniences of every kind, the Holy Family had reached the environs of Jerusalem. Here precautions and uneasiness were multiplied by reason of the

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(1) Towards the middle of February,—a season still cold in the mountains of the interior, where the temperature, according to M. de Volney, is nearly the same as our own. The plains of Syria, on the contrary, were already as hot as in summer.—(See p. 80, note 2.)

(2) S. Bonav., De Vita Christi.

(3) These large armies, often two or three thousand strong, were commanded by experienced chiefs, who gave Herod and the Romans full occupation. Some had a political aim, and made party war; others were only a mere collection of assassins, who carried long daggers under their cloaks, and killed those whom they wished to get rid of, even in the streets of Jerusalem.—(De Bello, lib. ii. c. 5.)

imminence of danger; the fugitives no longer dared to come near towns, nor even populous villages, where numbers of spies and informers had their eye upon strangers;[1] they followed the bed of torrents, dived into deserted roads, or the damp shade of woods, not daring to go far out of the way to renew their exhausted provisions, and suffering at once from fear, cold, and hunger. They had passed by Anathoth, and were moving in the direction of Ramla, to descend into the plains of Syria. Anxious to get out of a dangerous neighbourhood, they had borrowed some hours of the night, when they saw some armed men issue forth from a dark ravine, who stopped their passage. He who appeared to be the chief of this troop of banditti came forward from the hostile group to inspect the travellers. Joseph and Mary had stopped, and looked at each other with alarm: Jesus was asleep. The robber, who had come to take blood and gold, looked with astonishment at this old man, unarmed, just like a patriarch of olden times; at this young woman, covered with a veil, who seemed anxious to hide her child from him in her heart, so closely did she press him painfully to her breast. "They are poor," said the robber to himself, "and travel by night, like fugitives!" He too, perhaps, had a son in the cradle; perhaps the atmosphere of meekness and mercy which surrounded Jesus and Mary acted upon this ferocious soul: he lowered the point of his lance, and holding out a friendly hand to Joseph, he offered him a lodging for the night in his fortress, suspended upon the corner of a rock, like the nests of birds of prey. This offer, honestly made, was accepted with holy confidence, and the roof of the robber afforded hospitality, on this occasion, as well as the tent of the Arab.[2]

(1) Herod, who brought espionage to perfection in the East, covered the great roads with spies in every part of Judea.—(Josephus, Ant. Jud., lib. xv. c. 13.)

(2) The site where the local tradition has placed this scene, and where the ruins of the fortress of the banditti are still visible, continues to be very ill-famed. During the crusades, the Franks, to whom this tradition was familiar, had exalted the banditti chief to a feudal lord. "It is rare, however," says F. Nau, with amusing gravity, "that a lord of note becomes a highway robber." The crusaders were better versed in history than F. Nau. To this history, which

The next day, towards noon, the Holy Family stopped at the extremity of a vast forest of palm-trees, nopals, and wild fig-trees, which extends at a short distance from Ramla;[1] a carpet of everlasting flowers, narcissuses, and anemonies received the Sovereign of heaven and earth; the heats of summer ruled in the plain, and the warbling of birds, the perfume of plants, the tufted shade of fig-trees, and the distant bubbling of a spring, acted as a charm on the sleep of Christ. After a short rest, the moments of which were counted, the travellers proceeded on their journey. Their motive for moving towards Bethlehem is unknown; tradition has preserved the memory of their passing by it, and the Christians have erected an altar in the cave where Mary concealed her infant,[2] while Joseph went up to the town, either to inquire for the departure of a caravan, or to exchange the slow travelling beast, which had carried the Blessed Virgin, for a camel. Whatever was the motive which led Joseph and Mary to the crater of the volcano, there is no doubt that they stayed there but a few hours, and that they made haste to reach a maritime town of the Philisthines, to join the first caravan going to Egypt.

If we rely on the learned calculations of chronologists, who allow of no interval in this long journey, the holy pair must have found a caravan on the point of starting, on the coasts of Syria. This is the more probable, as the vernal equinox was at hand, and every one would be anxious to anticipate the season when the *simoom* exercises its empire over the desert, and makes its sea of sand as treacherous as the waves themselves.[3] Excepting the

seems authentic, has been added an embellishment, for which we cannot answer, asserting that the hospitable robber was the good thief in person.

(1) The spot fixed by tradition as one of the resting-places of the Holy Family is very charming; the ruins of a monastery are still seen there.—(Itinéraire de Paris à Jerusalem, t. ii.)

(2) This cave is called *the Grotto of the Virgin's milk*, because it is supposed that some drops of milk of the Mother of God fell upon the rock, while she suckled the infant Jesus.

(3) "The Arabs call the hot wind of the desert *simoom*, or poison: the impression it makes may be compared to that received from the mouth of a large oven when the bread is drawn. These winds prevail most frequently during the fifty days which comprise the equinoxes."—(Volney, Voyage en Syrie.)

mortal apprehension of the enraged pursuit of Herod, the second part of the journey of the Holy Family did not yield to the first in fatigue or suffering, or even in danger. On quitting Gaza, the ruined towers of which resounded with the dying sound of the waves, the travellers beheld nothing before them but immense solitudes of sand, of a dreary aspect and frightful barrenness, ploughed up by the hot wind of the desert, and oppressed by a fiery sky. No vegetation, except a few thin patches of heath, growing here and there on the lonely plain; no water, except the brackish spring where the Virgin and Joseph, who were weary, who were poor, and whom no one cared for, could not quench their thirst till after the rich merchants, their slaves, and camels had exhausted it, and there remained of this poor muddy water barely enough to fill the hollow of one's hand. The farther they went from the frontiers of Syria, the more did they feel thirst, and the springs were more scarce. At times, they discerned at a distance, in the middle of a boundless plain, a large blue clear lake, like the lake of Genesareth; the sky was reflected in its limpid waters, in which a solitary date-palm beheld its own image. A cry of joy hailed this discovery; they urged on the speed of the camels, and Mary raised her drooping head, like a rose of Jericho which foretells rain.[1] They were close upon this blessed lake, and already slaking their thirst in imagination; but, oh wretched fate! a mocking demon transported the lake some leagues farther on, and left nothing in its place but parched-up sand![2]

Another optical illusion, which is often repeated in this dry

(1) This rose, the cup of which opens and shuts according to the variations of the atmosphere, is consulted as a barometer by the Arabs.—(The Viscount Marcellus, in his Voyage en Orient, t. ii.)

(2) This is the phenomenon known by the name of *mirage*. During the expedition which the French made in Egypt in 1798, the soldiers, traversing the arid deserts of that burning country, parched with thirst, were often deceived by this cruel illusion. Every prominent object which offered itself to their eyes in the midst of these seas of sand, appeared to them surrounded with water: thus a hillock, which they perceived at a distance, seemed to them to rise out of the midst of a lake. Dying with want, they ran towards it; but, when they arrived at the place itself, they discovered their mistake: the lake had fled, and appeared yet farther off to their eager eyes.—(See de Fellens, du Mirage, Art. 6.)

and burning region, made travellers at a distance assume gigantic proportions. Arab horsemen, covered with their flowing cloaks, striped brown and white, and armed with the *djombié*—a dagger with a curved blade, which all the dwellers of the desert wear in their girdles—appeared afar off as tall as towers, and seemed to be moving in the air. The Virgin started, and pressed Jesus more closely to her heart; but the placid countenance of Joseph calmed her fears, although she could not understand the phenomenon which gave rise to them.[1]

At the approach of evening, the song of the camel-drivers ceased,[2] the leader of the caravan unfurled the flag which gives notice of the halt, and all the travellers assembled round this signal of order. An animated scene soon followed this halting-time. They unloaded the camels, who were kneeling at the feet of their masters, their burdens were piled up pyramidally; they set up a row of round stakes, to which the beasts of burden were to be tethered; the rich travellers pitched their tents, and the leader of the caravan placed sentinels to give notice of the approach of the Bedouins, those pirates of the desert, who were, and are still, robbers like Ismael, and hospitable like Abraham. Every merchant, after taking his repast of dates and milk, composed himself to sleep in his tent of mohair till the rising of the moon. The slaves and the poor travellers, in which number were the Son of God, his divine Mother, and Joseph, sat upon a rush mat, spread upon the ground, without any roof but the sky, and

(1) "I had occasion," says Niebuhr, "to remark a phenomenon which struck me as very singular; but which, in time, became familiar to me. An Arab mounted on a camel, whom I saw coming from a distance, appeared to me as tall as a tower, and seemed to move in the air; yet he was marching on the sand like ourselves. This optical illusion proceeds from a stronger refraction of the atmosphere, in these arid regions loaded with vapours of a different nature from those which fill the air of temperate countries."—(Voyage en Arabie, t. i. p. 208.)

(2) It is an almost universal custom in the East to enliven one another on the march, or at work, by singing. A Mussulman pilgrim has given a very picturesque description of the nocturnal march of a caravan of Mecca, by the light of lanterns fixed upon the camels, and to the measured singing of the camel-drivers. —(Voyage d'Abdoul Kerim.) The camel-drivers still sing songs peculiar to themselves in Syria and Egypt.—(Correspondance d'Orient, t. vi.)

felt the icy breeze of the night[1] upon their limbs, languid with heat and worn out with fatigue. At times was heard a cry of alarm: it was the Arabs of the desert, prowling about the slumbering caravan; disconcerted by the vigilance of the guards of the camp, they announced their departure by a volley of arrows, accompanied by the groans of the wounded. Then the Virgin, who had made a rampart with her body for her adored Son, raised up to heaven her eyes moist with tears, and her forehead pale with fear; she knew but too well that her Jesus was mortal as well as the least of the children of men!

When the moon diffused her white light over that shadowless and noiseless desert, where the breezes of the solitude found not a blade of grass to raise a sigh, they struck their tents, and the painful march began again, with all the inconveniences, sufferings, and terrors experienced the day before.

At length, they arrived at the extremity of this region of illusions and silence. Egypt, that ancient nursery of every light and every species of idolatry, presented itself to the travellers, with its obelisks of rose granite, its temples with tops of polished steel,[2] its colossal pyramids, its villages resembling islands, and its providential river, bordered with reeds, and covered with vessels. This country appeared richer, more populous, and more commercial than Judea; but it was the land of exile! on the other side of the desert was their own country! The hearts of the exiles of Israel had remained there.

After a journey of a hundred and forty leagues,[3] the fugitives reached Heliopolis, where their nation had founded a colony. In

(1) Although the days are scorching in the desert at this season, the nights are very cold.—(Voln.; Sav.)

(2) On the dome of the sanctuary of the principal temple of Heliopolis was observed an immense mirror, of polished steel, which reflected the rays of the luminary of heaven. There was a similar one on the top of the lighthouse of Alexandria, and the images of ships were reflected in it long before they appeared in the horizon.—(Correspondance d'Orient, t. v.; Lettres de Savary.)

(3) See Barad., t. i. c. 8.—The author of the Voyages de Jesus Christ reckons only a hundred leagues, but perhaps he takes no account of the windings of the roads.

that city arose the temple of Jehovah, which Onias had built upon the plan of the holy house. The ornaments of this Egyptian temple were almost equal to those of the other; only, as a sign of inferiority, a massive lamp of gold, suspended from the ceiling, supplied the place of the famous candlestick with seven branches at Jerusalem. At the gate of this city, the population of which was in great measure composed of Egyptians and idolatrous Arabs, was a majestic tree, of the mimosa species, to which the Arabs of the Yemen, established on the banks of the Nile, paid a kind of worship.[1] At the approach of the Holy Family, the *fetiche* tree slowly bent down its shady branches, as if to offer the *salam* to the young Master of nature, whom Mary carried in her arms;[2] and, if we may believe the historian Palladius, at the moment when the divine travellers passed under the granite arches of the gate of Heliopolis, all the idols of a neighbouring temple fell on their faces to the ground.[3]

Joseph and Mary only passed through the City of the Sun, and repaired to Matarieh, a beautiful village shaded by sycamores, where the only fountain of sweet water in Egypt is found. There in a dwelling like a bee-hive, where the doves built their nests, the fugitive family reposed in peace, far away from Herod.

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(1) The Arabs, who had gradually forgotten the God of Abraham, adored at that time a number of idols, each more monstrous than the other. "The date-tree," says Azraki, "was adored by the tribe of Khozua, and the Beni-Thekif worshipped a rock; a large tree named *zat arouat* was adored by the Koreisch, &c." The Persians scornfully designated the Arabs by the title of "adorers of stones."

(2) We are indebted to Sozomen for this event, which it requires some courage to reproduce in this age of mockery, and which, after all, is hardly a miracle. It is certain that there exists in Arabia a tree of the species of the sensitives and mimosas, which bends down its branches at the approach of man. Niebuhr, who is not suspected of credulity, found this tree in the Yemen, and the Arabs, who give it the name of tree of hospitality, hold it in such veneration that it is not lawful to pluck a leaf from it. If this mimosa, by a natural phenomenon, bends down its branches at the approach of man, much more must it have had cause to lower them at the approach of the Son of God.

(3) Palladius is not the only one who relates this miracle; the martyr Dorotheus, St. Anselm, St. Bonaventure, Lira, Dionysius the Carthusian, Testatus, Ludolphus, Barradius, &c., attest it in like manner.

This cruel prince, after waiting in vain for the Magi in his palace at Jericho, his favourite residence, learned at length that they had repassed the frontiers of his kingdom, and that, without giving him an account of their mission, they were gone back to the country of the Persians. Pale already from the slow fever which consumed him, the King of the Jews became still paler with wrath. He was deceived at the very moment when he was delighted at the thought of his unequalled cleverness in deceiving others—deceived by these uncircumcised men, who, contrary to all expectation, had found out his tortuous and wily policy! If the Magi had not discovered the child to whom the star had conducted them, they would have told him so on their return.—They had then discovered his secret retirement, and this was somewhere in Bethlehem or its environs, since they had not carried their search any farther.—How was this dangerous child now to be distinguished from common children?—There was but one last expedient left, one extreme measure to destroy him: this was to include him in one general massacre.—But the people!—At this thought the aged king mused for a moment; then a wild and scornful smile passed over his lips. The people dare nothing, said Herod to himself, against kings who dare everything!

"And sending, *he* killed all the men-children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the borders thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men."[1]

According to a number of grave authors,[2] who have tradition and probability on their side, the Holy Family remained seven years in Egypt. There are still found traces of their dwelling there: the spring where Mary used to wash the infant's linen;[3]

(1) This gospel fact, which the school of Voltaire has called in question, is proved, not only by our sacred books, but also by the testimony of Jews and Pagans.—(Macrobius, lib. xi. c. 4, De Saturnal.; Orig., Contra Celsum, lib. xi. c. 58; Toldos Huldr., pp. 12, 14, 20.)

(2) See Trombel, in Vit. Deip.; Zachariam, in Diss. ad Hist. Eccl.; Anselm; Cantual; Euseb.; St. Thom.

(3) This fountain is still called *the Fountain of Mary;* an ancient tradition records that the Blessed Virgin bathed the Infant Jesus in it. In the earliest

the hill covered with bushes, where she dried it in the sun; the sycamore, in the shade of which she loved to sit with her Son upon her knees,[1] are still there after the lapse of eighteen centuries. The pilgrims of Europe and Asia knew the way to them, and the descendants of the nation of Pharaoh treat them with honour. To every spot some original legend of the olden time is attached, like the moss on the damp wall of a religious ruin.[2]

At Nazareth, Mary had led an humble and laborious life, but at Heliopolis she beheld misery in all its aspects. It was necessary to find means of support,—a difficult thing out of one's own country, and among a people parcelled out in national and hereditary corporations, who were by no means fond of strangers. As they were poor, observes St. Basil, it is evident that they

times of Christianity, the faithful built a church in this place; later on, the Mussulmans constructed a mosque there, and the disciples of both creeds came to pray at *the Fountain of Mary* for the cure of their maladies; the fountain is still there; the pilgrimages continue, but no vestiges remain either of church or mosque.—(Savary, t. i. p. 122; Corresp. d'Or., t. vi. p. 3.)

(1) "Not far from the fountain, I was taken into an enclosure planted with trees; a Mussulman who was our guide stopped us before a sycamore, and said to us, *This is the tree of Jesus and Mary.* Vansleb, rector of Fontainebleau, informs us that the old sycamore fell down from old age in 1058. The Cordeliers of Cairo piously preserved in their sacristy the last remains of this tree; there remained in the garden only a stump, whence, no doubt, came the tree which we saw. General Kleber, after the victory of Heliopolis, would visit as a pilgrim the tree of the Holy Family; he had written his name on the bark of one of the branches: this name has since disappeared, effaced either by time or by some envious hand."—(Corresp. d'Or., t. vi., lettre 141.)

(2) The following is one of those legends brought from the lands beyond the sea by one of our good old French barons, the Seigneur d'Englure; we give it with all the original grace of the good old time:—"When our Lady, the Mother of God, had passed over the deserts, and when she came to this said place, she laid our Lord down upon the ground, and went about in search of water, but could find none; so she returned full of sorrow to her dear infant, who lay stretched upon the sand, who had dug into the ground with his heels, so that there sprung up a fountain of very good and sweet water. So our Lady was very glad of this, and thanked our Lord for it, and our Lady laid her dear infant down again, and washed the little clothes of our Lord in the water of this fountain, and then spread them out on the ground to dry; and from the water which ran off these little clothes, as it dried up, there grew from each drop a shrub, which shrubs yield balsam, &c."

must have submitted to painful labour to procure the necessaries of life.—Alas! had they always even these? "Oftentimes," says Ludolph of Saxony, "did the child Jesus ask his mother for bread, when she could give him nothing but her tears!"

Meanwhile, Herod had died of a horrible and nameless disease, after seeing himself devoured alive by the worms of the tomb. Dwelling to his last breath upon the joy that the people would feel at the news of his decease, he had with tears requested his sister Salome, a wicked woman, to have the flower of the Jewish nobility shot to death with arrows, whom he had imprisoned with this intention, that people might weep at his funeral whether they would or not.[1] He was carried to his castle of Herodion in a golden litter, covered with scarlet and precious stones. His sons and his army followed his bier with downcast looks, while the people, having the happiness of deliverance before their eyes, cast upon him as many maledictions as a cloud showers down drops of rain.

Admonished in a dream, by the angel of the Lord, of the death of the tyrant, Joseph returned with Mary and the child into the land of Israel; "but hearing that Archelaus reigned in Judea in the room of Herod, his father, he was afraid to go thither; and being warned in sleep, he turned aside into the quarters of Galilee."

(1) Josephus, Ant. Jud., lib. xvii. c. 8.—The memory of Herod remained in such execration among the princes of the people and the priests, that they instituted a feast, which was celebrated on the 25th of September, out of joy that he was dead. "There is a feast on the 7th of Chisleu," says the Jewish calendar, "on account of the death of Herod; for he had hated the wise, and we rejoice before the Lord when the wicked depart out of this world."—(Basn., t. i. liv. ii. c. 8.)

CHAPTER XV.

RETURN FROM EGYPT.

How sorrowful is exile! and how sweet to breathe the air of our native land! The bread of the stranger, like that of the wicked, leaves grit in the mouth and bitterness in the heart; his streams tell not of the sports of our childhood; the song of his birds has no melodious notes; his scenes are destitute of that sweet and charming attraction possessed by the scenes of our own country! . . . .

What must have been the joy of the two holy spouses when they beheld again that land of Chanaan, whose grand boundaries, soft outlines, universal harmony, and variety of aspects contrasted so happily and so strikingly with the monotonous splendours of Egypt! Here a population rustic and hardy, with a warlike turn, an open address, a worship grave and pure; there, slaves herded by castes, given to plunder, mingling with their worship infamous practices, and exhausting their resources to erect temples to the ox Apis, the crocodile, and the sea-onion! One must be profoundly religious, as Joseph and Mary were—one must love one's country as the Hebrews loved theirs, to understand the pious and sweet impressions which the two Galilean spouses felt at the sight of the land of Jehovah and their beautiful city of Nazareth.

After so long an absence, the Holy Family returned to their humble hearth, amidst the congratulations, the astonishment, the eager inquiries of their relations, who all vied with each other in entertaining them; but desolation and bitter reverses soon succeeded to all this joy. The deserted dwelling of the poor family was scarcely habitable: the roof, decayed and fallen-in in places, was ornamented here and there with long grass, and had afforded free entrance into the interior to the wintry blast and the beating

rains of the equinoxes;[1] the lower apartment was cold, damp, and green; wild pigeons made their nests in the mysterious and hallowed cell where the WORD was made flesh; brambles shot up their brown thorny garlands in the small court; everything, in fine, in that old dwelling, already gilded by ages, had assumed that ruinous and desolate appearance which fastens upon deserted edifices as the seal of the master's absence. It was necessary to set about these urgent repairs; it was necessary to replace tools and furniture either unfit for use or altogether vanished; perhaps they had to repay a sum borrowed in Egypt to enable them to return. Then it was, no doubt, that they sold the paternal fields till the year of jubilee. Of all that Joseph and Mary possessed before their long journey, they had nothing left but the ruined house of Nazareth, the workshop of Joseph, and their own arms; but Jesus was there. Young as he was, Jesus took up the axe, and followed his aged father into the villages, where work was found for them;[2] his work, proportioned to his age and strength, was never wanting to aid his mother. Easy circumstances had long disappeared; but by dint of privations, working late and early, and good courage, they provided for absolute necessity. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph gave themselves up to hard labour, and He who could command legions of angels never asked of God, for himself or those belonging to him, anything but daily bread.

The interior life of this happy family, who have been surnamed the *terrestrial Trinity*, has not come to the knowledge of men: it is the course of water lost among the grass; it is the holy of holies, with its cloud of perfumes and its double veil. Nevertheless, by studying minutely and examining one by one, and in all their aspects, the facts of the gospel, what we know leads us to surmise to a certain extent what we do not know; and the

(1) The time of rains, in Judea, is that of the equinoxes, and especially of the autumnal equinox: it is also the season for storms, which are accompanied with violent showers, or hail.—(Volney, Voyage en Syrie.)

(2) St. Justin, martyr (Dialog. cum Tryphone), relates that Jesus Christ helped his father to make yokes and ploughs. And Godescard, t. xiv. p. 436, Vie de la Sainte Vierge, says, "A very ancient author assures us, that in his time yokes were shown which our Saviour had made with his own hands."

public life of Jesus Christ casts certain brilliant lights upon his hidden life, and that of the Blessed Virgin. We will endeavour to fill up this void with all that reserve, and all that conscientious application, which so grave a subject demands.

Jesus, in whom were hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,[1] had no need of being taught by men; therefore every supposition to the contrary is positively rejected by the Church. St. John also, in his gospel, informs us that the Jews in the time of Jesus Christ considered him as a young man without learning,[2] and the astonishment of the Nazareans to see him so profoundly versed in sacred literature, sufficiently testifies that they had no knowledge of his having been, like St. Paul, educated at "the feet of a master." The Talmudists and the Jewish authors of the Toldos maintain, on the contrary, that a celebrated rabbin initiated Jesus in the mysteries of science and magic; but setting aside the second part of the assertion, which is absurd, and taking the matter only from a mere human point of view, as the rationalists do, this is evidently false, for two reasons. First, Jesus was neither a zealot, nor a man wedded to traditions; and we see, all through the gospel, that he strongly disapproved of the narrow-minded views, captious distinctions, and low subtilties of the doctors of the synagogue. Secondly, the rabbi Josue Perachia, whom they assign him as preceptor, had still to be born, since he flourished a century later.

To place Jesus in the midst of the rabbins as a scholar, would be as illogical as to attempt to support an oak by surrounding it with reeds. He did not teach like them, says the evangelist,[3] and this it is easy to conceive, for he derived his wisdom from himself; and his teaching, still taking it from a natural point of view, seems to flow from a soul most elevated, most pure, and upright, and from a mind so vast and so uniformly sound, that assuredly it had not been warped in the disputes of the schools.

(1) S. Paul., Ep. ad Coloss. c. ii. v. 9.
(2) S. Joan., c. vii. v. 15.
(3) Matt. vii. 29.

Strauss admits that all the wisdom and science of the time would not have been able to form a man like Jesus Christ. "If," says he, "Jesus Christ had exhausted all the tuition of his time, it is no less true that none of those elements sufficed, even by a great deal, to cause a revolution in the world; and the leaven indispensable for so great a work, could have been derived only from the depths of his own soul."

His eloquence, like his morality, was his own. It was not the emphatic exaggerations of the rabbins, nor the majestic, striking, and violently contrasted diction of the ancient prophets; it was, as he himself said, a fountain of living water, reflecting in its course the birds of heaven, the harvests and the flowers of the fields. . . . . This eloquence, perfectly simple, penetrated to the bottom of things, and was allied, without effort, to great thoughts. Each word was a precious seed of virtue; every instruction cast into the mysterious spaces of the future a long train of light, which was to grow insensibly, and extend to the perfect day of the regeneration of the world. Even those who have audaciously denied his miracles, have not been able to help acknowledging that his words were those of a God.[1]

Jesus was endowed with a soul profound and meditative, which needed an ample space in which to extend itself. Confined during the day to manual labour, which absorbed all his time, he made up at night for his obscure fatigue, and became again lawgiver and prophet in presence of the starry heaven. Standing upon an elevated platform, whence could be seen the mountains and extensive woods of the land of Chanaan, he poured forth his soul before the Author of nature, of whom he was the

(1) "I own to you that the majesty of the Scriptures astonishes me," says Rousseau; "the sanctity of the gospel speaks to my heart. Look at the books of the philosophers, with all their pomp, how small they are by the side of this! Can it be that a book at once so sublime and simple could be the work of men? Can it be that he whose history it relates could be himself but a man? Is that the tone of an enthusiast, or of an ambitious sectarian? What meekness! what purity in his manners! what affecting gracefulness in his instructions! what sublimity in his maxims! what profound wisdom in his discourses! . . . ."—(Emile, t. iii. p. 365.)

envoy, the Son, and the equal. These communings, all alone with God, in the silence of the night, and the desert, and in silent thought, were one of the habits of Jesus Christ; we find many examples of them in the gospel. The model of men, the Word incarnate, would, no doubt, teach his followers to separate the pure gold of prayer from the monstrous alloy of ostentation and hypocrisy which the Pharisees of his time were accustomed to mix up with it.

The Blessed Virgin, who was never importunate or exacting, made no sort of opposition to this retirement; she knew that Jesus then sounded the depths of the immeasurable abyss which opened beneath the feet of the human race, and that the redemption of the world would be the fruit of these silent meditations. Respecting the labours of that mighty mind which redoubled upon itself, and looking to the future glory which every moment brought nearer and nearer, Mary already saw the heavens opened, death vanquished, and the Messias rallying all nations beneath his standard. . . . . But on a sudden the prophecy of the aged man in the temple presented itself, dark as a funeral bier, at the end of this enchanted perspective; a cold chill ran through the veins of the poor mother, and her heart, in which the love of Jesus had so large a share, melted in infinite agony. A secret voice cried out to her, "There must be an expiation of blood! Christ must die!" Then, humbly laying down the work to which she was condemned by her indigence,[1] the daughter of David came to look after her Son; she wanted to see him, to make sure, in a maternal embrace, that he was still there,—that he was still alive!

When he saw her, Jesus cast down his pensive eye, which had been fixed upon the stars; his youthful forehead, contracted by a thought as vast as the world, became again the smooth and shining forehead of the child. Then Mary, shutting up in her heart her

(1) Tertullian says, in the third century, that Mary earned her livelihood by working; and Celsus, in the second century, said that Mary was a woman who had lived by the work of her hands.

sinister fears, advised repose after the long watch. It was necessary to recruit his strength for the following day; the walk would be fatiguing and the labour painful . . . . The Son of God followed his mortal mother in silence, for he loved her, and *was subject to her.*

An extraordinary incident, which overpowered the soul of the Blessed Virgin, marked the entrance of Jesus into the state of adolescence. Joseph and Mary, religious observers of the law of their fathers, went up regularly every year to Jerusalem, at the time of the Passover. This journey, which they had performed stealthily, and lost in the crowd, as long as the son of the enemy of God had occupied the throne of the Macchabees, had become easier since the exile of Archelaus, and the occupation of the country by the Romans. When Christ had reached his twelfth year, his parents, freed from apprehension on account of Herod, took him with them to Jerusalem. They departed in a body from Nazareth; and then, as they travelled along, the Hebrew pilgrims divided into small companies, according to age, sex, and family relationship or intimacy.

Around the Virgin were Mary of Cleophas, sister-in-law of Joseph; another Mary, designated in the gospel by the name of *altera Maria;* Salome, the wife of Zebedee, who came from Bethsaida with her sons and her husband; Joanna, the wife of Chus, and a number of Nazarenes of her family connexions and neighbourhood. Joseph followed them at some distance, conversing gravely with Zebedee the fisherman, and the ancients of his tribe. Jesus walked amidst some young Galileans, whom the gospel, according to the genius of the Hebrew tongue, has called his brethren, and who were his near relatives.[1]

Among this group of young men, who went before the rest,

(1) St. Epiphanius and St. Bernard inform us that in these journeys, the men went in companies separate from the women, and that St. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin were in different companies, which was the reason why they did not feel uneasy at first at the disappearance of Jesus, and did not perceive it till the evening, when all the travellers assembled together.—(See also Aëlred, abbot of Rieval, Serm. seu Tractatus de Jesu duodeni, Dom. intra oct. Epiph.)

were distinguished the sons of Zebedee: James, impetuous as the lake of Tiberias on a stormy day; John, younger even than Jesus, whose sweet countenance, by the side of that of his brother, seemed to personify the lamb of Isaias, living in peace with the lion of Jordan. Next to the fishermen of Bethsaida, whom Jesus named later on *Boanerges* (sons of thunder), were the four sons of Alpheus; James, who was Bishop of Jerusalem, an austere and grave youth, with long flowing hair, a pale face, and a cold and mortified appearance. Proud of being devoted as a Nazarene, he gave himself airs of offensive superiority over him whom he then considered the son of the carpenter. The virtues and imperfections inherent in the soil were seen in his character; an unshaken firmness, inclinations upright and religious; but at the same time a strong contempt for all that had not sprung from Abraham, and an excellent opinion of himself. Jude, Simon, and José, the other sons of Alpheus, were youths of rough, simple, and warlike appearance, already arrived at adolescence, and who looked upon the son of the humble Mary as their inferior in every way—a thing which they had a difficulty in shaking off afterwards, as we see in the gospel.[1] And what of Jesus? Jesus pretended to nothing, neither to devotion, nor austerity, nor wisdom, nor knowledge, because he possessed the plenitude of all these things, and people usually affect what they have not.

To have seen him, simply attired as an Essenian, his long hair, of the colour of antique bronze,[2] parted over his dark forehead, and gracefully flowing over his shoulders, one would have taken him for David, at the moment when the prophet Samuel saw him come, little, timid, and in the dress of a simple shepherd, to receive the holy unction. There was, however, in the brown,

(1) S. Joan. Chrysost., Serm. 44.

(2) The rabbins have taken occasion from the colour of the hair of Jesus, to give way to malicious declamations against him; but what is extraordinary is, that they utter against him precisely the same reproaches as they do against David. "He was red like Esau; he had his blood upon his head; the soul of Esau had passed into him." They have forgotten nothing but the *evil eye* with which they favoured the prophet king.

soft eye of Christ,[1] something more than in the eye of his great ancestor, full as it was of poetry and inspiration; something penetrating and divine was discovered in it, which laid bare the thought and sounded the depths of the heart; but Jesus veiled at that time the brilliancy of his look, as Moses did his radiant brow when he came forth from the tabernacle. He walked along, conversing sensibly, but suiting his conversation to his age, with his young relatives according to the flesh, whom he intended to make his apostles; he discerned beneath their rude exterior, the weight and value of these rough diamonds, who were one day to shine with so great brilliancy, and he loved them in their future career. His expectations were not disappointed; these men, who, like the rest of their nation, had had their dreams of gold and power in connexion with the Messias, at his voice cast off all their prejudices, both national and religious, to adopt a doctrine calumniated, the principles and promises of which, like the maledictions of the old law, spoke of nothing but sufferings to be endured, and persecutions to be undergone. They bound themselves to him by chains so strong, that neither the princes of the earth, nor cold, nor nakedness, nor famine, nor the sword, could separate them from his love; they walked in his footsteps, trampling courageously on the thorns which the world strewed in their path, and suffering themselves to be treated like the refuse of the human race. They were not ashamed, either of the Son of man, or of his gospel, or of *the foolishness of the cross!* Why should they? It is for impostors to blush, and the apostles never preached but from their own intimate conviction. These upright and guileless hearts gave to their testimony all that could render

(1) Niceph., Hist. Eccl., t. i. p. 125. His portrait of our Lord, traced after tradition, is the most authentic which has come down to us. The Rev. Mr. Walsh, the author of quite a recent book, devoted to rare or unpublished monuments of the first age of Christianity, has just called our attention to a very curious medal, known as early as the fifth century. The obverse represents the head of our Lord, seen in profile; the hair is parted after the manner of the Nazarites, smooth as far as the ears, and flowing over the shoulders; the beard thick, not long, but forked; the countenance handsome as well as the bust, over which the tunic falls in graceful folds.

it credible and sacred among men; they abandoned everything, suffered everything, forgave everything, and sealed with their blood the gospel of their divine Master.[1]

But at the time of which we are speaking, these heroic virtues were not even yet expanded, and these youthful Galileans little thought that they should one day give their lives in support of the divinity of their travelling companion. At the end of four days' journey, the pilgrims reached the Holy City, whither an immense concourse of foreign Jews flocked together.[2] The family of Joseph and Mary assembled to eat the paschal lamb, which the priests had the charge of immolating between the two vesper hours,[3] in the court of the temple; to this they added unleavened bread, wild lettuces, and whatever appertained to this ancient ceremony. The days of the feast being over, the relations of Christ assembled to return to their province. As they returned in the same order in which they had come, the holy couple did not at first perceive that Jesus was missing. Mary thought he was with Joseph, or with the two named James; Joseph, for his part, thought he was with his young relations, or with Mary. In the evening, the several companies assembled together, and the Blessed Virgin sought, but in vain, for Jesus in the crowd of travellers who arrived in succession at the caravansary; no one knew what had become of our Saviour. The grief of the two holy spouses was inexpressible. "The deposit of heaven, the Son of God!" muttered Joseph, sorrowfully. "My son!" said the poor young mother, with a voice drowned with tears. They sought him all night, they sought him all day, calling after him along the road, calling out his name in the woods, looking anxiously down

(1) Pascal has said, "I willingly believe these histories, whose witnesses expose themselves to death."

(2) The feast of the Passover collected together at Jerusalem as many as two million five hundred thousand persons.—(De Bello, lib. vii. c. 17.) Cestus, wanting to persuade Nero that the Jewish nation was not so contemptible as he believed it to be, had the people numbered by priests. At the feast of the Pasch, there were slain two hundred and fifty-six thousand six hundred lambs; there was a lamb for each family.

(3) That is, from noon or one o'clock till sunset.—(Basn., t. v. liv. vii. c. 2.)

the precipices, sometimes fearing for his life, sometimes for his liberty, and not knowing what they should do if he was lost. They re-entered Jerusalem, ran to all their friends, and weary with going about the quarters of that great city, they at last made their way into the temple. Underneath the portico, where the doctors of the law were, was a child, who delighted the ancients of Israel by the depth of his understanding, and the clearness of his answers to the most difficult questions; they gathered round him, and every one was in admiration at his precocious and miraculous wisdom. "It is either Daniel or an angel," they said, at a little distance from the afflicted Virgin. "It is Jesus!" said the young mother, pressing forward towards the place where the doctors were. Then, coming up to the Messias with the expression of extreme tenderness, which in a manner extinguished the last reflex of sorrow: "My son," she said, sweetly, "why hast thou done so to us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing!"

The child was effaced before the God; the answer was dry and mysterious. "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" The holy couple kept silence; they did not at first understand the meaning of the answer of the Messias.

Jesus rose up and followed them to Nazareth; his perfect submission to their will speedily effaced this slight cloud. "And his mother kept all these words in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and age, and grace with God and man."

CHAPTER XVI.

MARY AT THE PREACHING OF JESUS.

"There are two worlds in our history," as one of the finest geniuses of our age has said, "the one beyond the cross, the other before it." The primitive world, fallen into decrepitude at

the time of the regenerating mission of Jesus Christ, presented a strange spectacle, for the burlesque lent a hand there to the horrible. The Arab and the Gaul, after having retained for ages the primitive idea of the unity of God, adored the acacia and the oak;[1] the Hindoo made a divinity of the Ganges, and sacrificed human victims to Sactis, the goddess of death;[2] the Egyptian, that wisest of all people, paid devout worship to garlic, to the lotus, and almost every bulbous-rooted plant;[3] the unknown populations of young America adored the tiger, the vulture, storms, and roaring cataracts;[4] in fine, the Greeks and Romans, by their own acknowledgment, filled their temples with demons,[5] and these nations, so refined, so polished, who abounded in men of superior genius, had deified vice in its most hideous shades, and peopled their Olympus with robbers, adulterers, and murderers. Morals corresponded with creeds; corruption, rushing down like a vast torrent from the heights of the seven imperial hills, inundated all the provinces. Judea, which had not escaped the contagion of vice any more than other countries, grew depraved with frightful rapidity; her religion no longer rested on fundamental dogmas, but on an innumerable multitude of parasitical superfœtations, and the reveries of her rabbins were enthroned on the chair of Moses.[6]

(1) The Pagan Gauls of the sixth and seventh centuries made gods of oak-trees; they burned torches before these trees, and invoked them as if they could hear; the enormous stones which were near these trees participated in the honour which was paid to them.—(Hist. ecclésiastique de Bretagne, t. iv., seventh century; Capitul. Caroli Magni, lib. i. tit. 64.)

(2) See Picture of India, by Buckingham.

(3) The sarcasm of Juvenal is well known: "O sanctas gentes, quibus hæc nascuntur in hortis Numina."—(Sat. xv. v. 10.)

(4) Garcilasso, l. i. c. 2 et 12.

(5) Prophyrius, who so well knew the foundations of polytheism, acknowledges that the demons were the objects of worship among the Gentiles. "There are," says he, "spirits impure, deceitful, malevolent, who would pass for gods, and get themselves adored by men: they must be appeased, lest they should do us mischief. Some, who are lively and joyous, allow themselves to be propitiated by shows and games; the gloomy temper of others requires the odour of fat, and feeds on bloody sacrifices."

(6) It is a maxim among the Jews that the covenant was made with them on

In the midst of these deplorable aberrations, what became of proud reason, that queen of intelligences, who takes her own narrow horizon for the boundaries of the universe, and places the gods upon the bed of Procrustes? Where did she hold her empire? Where had she planted her standard, while on every side breaches were made in her bulwarks? If she could without foreign aid reconquer the territory which she had lost, why did she not do so? . . . . But she felt that the torrent would overflow her weak embankments, and unable to restrain it, she was content to observe its ravages. Supported by philosophy, she groaned over the inanimate remains of the social body whose fall she had been unable to prevent: Christianity supervened, who said to the corpse, "Arise, and walk!" . . . . And it was done according to her word.

From that day a new race, healed of all its evils, washed from all its defilements in the sacred piscina, assembled round the cross which the Son of Mary had planted on the regenerated earth, as the trophy of God over hell.

This glorious revolution, which set charity on the throne, and placed all the virtues in her train,—this ever-memorable event, which changed the face of the world, and the echo of which will make itself heard even to the consummation of ages,—had Nazareth for its starting-point; from the hollow of that nameless rock flowed humble Christianity, "an obscure spring, a drop of water unnoticed, where two sparrows could not have slaked their thirst, which one ray of the sun might have dried up, and which at this day, as the great ocean of minds, has filled up every abyss of human wisdom, and bathed with its never-failing waters the past, the present, and the future."[1]

Mount Sinai, not on the footing of the written law, but on that of the oral law. They annul the former to enthrone the latter, and reduce all religion finally to tradition. This corruption had risen to such a height among the Jews, even in the time of our Lord, that he reproaches them, in St. Mark, with having destroyed the word of God by their traditions. But it is much worse in these days; they compare the sacred text to water, and the *Misnah*, or *Talmud*, to the best wine; moreover, the written law is salt, but the *Talmud* is pepper, cinnamon, &c.

(1) M. de Lamartine, Voy. en Orient.

We know nothing of the means which prepared this great fact, which holds so high dominion over the history of modern times. From the time of his manifestation in the temple, the Son of God led a life hidden and contemplative, between his adoptive father and his mother. This period, lost to the world, was doubtless that in which the Virgin passed her most tranquil days. It is not when human life moves on in commotion, like a wintry torrent, that it is the most happy; it is when it resembles the course of that water which meanders in a silvery thread among the grass of the meadows. Mary, deprived indeed of all the enjoyments of luxury, and all the sweets of ease, but living with her Son, working for him, studying his inclinations, seeing him at all times, offering herself to him as the first fruits of his sacred harvest; making herself the first, the most humble, the most docile of his disciples, and bowing down her matured reason before the superior reason and divinity of her Son, Mary must then have been a happy Mother! If, at those times when Jesus revealed to her the most profound sense of the prophecies, he met with some passage which spoke of sufferings to be undergone, a dark cloud spread over the chaste brow of the Virgin; but soon her sweet and gracious countenance recovered a little serenity. The storm murmured as yet at a distance, and their bark was moored in a tranquil bay. Her Son was there! she hung upon his looks, his words, and his smallest actions. How eager was she to serve him—her Son! how happily did she sit up whole nights to spin and to weave his tunics for labour, his holiday garments, that seamless coat, a masterpiece of ingenuity and patience, which later on! . . . . . but at this time the "Lord had anointed his Christ with an oil of gladness only." A companion of the spouse, the wise Virgin of the gospel "left the morrow to provide for itself," "and the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, kept her heart and her mind."

Jesus was perfection itself, the omniscient, thrice holy, surpassing all in power and wisdom; as God, he could be indebted for nothing to creatures, but as man he owed something to Mary. She it was who initiated him, from his earliest infancy, in the

humble virtues inherent in humanity, and in her own simple and poetic tastes. That patient and unalterable meekness which he knew how to unite with the firmness of a legislator and a prophet; that merciful compassion which tempered the indignation of an irritated God, and rendered him, HIMSELF, the model man, the accomplished just one, the support of sinful man; that tenderness which was all good, all unaffected towards children, whom he loved to caress and bless during his divine mission; a thousand imperceptible shades, a thousand reflexes, half-absorbed in the large masses of light, which composed the mortal life of Jesus Christ, bear the impress of Mary.[1]—Thus does heaven readily accept the aroma of flowers, though flowers are the daughters of earth.

It cannot be doubted that Jesus returned the Virgin tenderness for tenderness, and solicitude for solicitude; a woman so noble in blood and heart had certain claims upon all, and above all upon a Son, for the love of whom she had imposed upon herself, in the spring-time of her age, so many privations, labours, and sacrifices. HE, who will take account in heaven of a cup of cold water given in his name, must have affectionately preserved the memory of the obligations he was under to Mary; and if we perceive in the gospel, that he sometimes spoke to his divine Mother less like her son than her Lord, it was because at those times that he divested himself of his earthly appendages, the more to glorify his Father, whose interests always held the foremost place in his view. The Virgin knew too well the sacred mission of her Son, to be uneasy at his words, which were sometimes severe; she waited for the legislator to give place to the young Galilean whom she had fed with her milk, and the transformation was never slow in coming; the human nature soon granted what the divine nature had refused.

At the time when Jesus had attained his twenty-ninth year,

(1) Nel vestire il Verbo d'umana carne non gli diede ella (la Vergine) punto, o di potenza, o di santità, o di giustizia che egli (Gesù) gia da se solo non possedesse; ma gli die molto bensi di misericordia.—(P. Paolo Segneri, *Magnificat* spiegato.)

the angel of death came to decimate the Holy Family. Joseph, that patriarch of ancient manners, whose submissive faith and simplicity of heart recalled the remembrance of Abraham and the era of his tent,—Joseph, whom the Holy Ghost himself has adorned with the beautiful name of "just," sweetly fell asleep in the bosom of the Lord, between his adopted Son and his chaste spouse. Jesus and Mary wept over him, and made a mournful vigil of the dead over his cold remains; the midnight breeze mingled with the lamentations of the poor family: the Nabals of Galilee died more sumptuously, though, as they lowered their heads to pass under the sunken gate of the tomb, they had not the magnificent hopes of the carpenter of Nazareth.

The funeral of the son of David was humble, like his fortune; but Mary shed abundant tears over his funeral couch, and the Son of God conducted this simple mourning. What emperor ever obtained the like obsequies?

At length, the time for preaching the gospel approached, and He, whom God destined from all eternity to be its high priest and apostle, left Nazareth, to repair to the banks of the Jordan, where John baptized. There must have been an affecting and solemn scene of adieu between the Virgin and her Son. The public life of Jesus was about to commence. Alone, poor, sprung from the people, without any resource but his courage, his patience, and that gift of miracles which he never used for his own personal benefit, he went forth to confront an order of things, "not strong enough to resist him, but strong enough to cause his death."[1] The Virgin could not help a feeling of alarm at seeing Jesus embark upon this stormy sea of the Jewish world, where so many prophets, and so illustrious, had been wrecked. She knew the insurmountable pride of the Pharisees, the narrow and malignant fanaticism of the princes of the synagogue, the sanguinary caprice of Herod Antipas; she knew also the oracles relating to the Messias, which spoke of suffering and ignominy! . . . . . The daughter of the kings of Juda, who was not of the race of

(1) M. de Lamartine, *liv. cité.*

the feeble, and who knew that her Son was God, had not her soul the less wounded by this first separation, which seemed to her the prelude and image of a separation cruel in a very different way. She let Jesus depart with her heart bursting with agony; and when the sound of his footsteps grew fainter in the distance, when she found herself alone—entirely alone—in that house where she had spent so many sweet hours, between her Son and her spouse, she hid her head in her hands, and remained silent and thoughtful, like the statue of grief upon the stone of a mausoleum.

The absence of CHRIST was prolonged; the Virgin learned with profound admiration, but without surprise, the wonders of his baptism, during which the Trinity had, in a manner, become palpable and revealed to men. They told her of the white dove, extending his divine wings over the Saviour, and that, at the same time, a voice from heaven proclaimed the Son of the Most High. This joy, however, gave place to an extreme anxiety, when she knew that Jesus, when scarcely come forth from the waters of the Jordan, had penetrated into the deep and perilous defiles of the high mountain of the *Quarantaine*,[1] to prepare himself for the work of the salvation of the world, by fasting, meditation, and prayer. How much she must have suffered, when she thought how Jesus was wandering in a labyrinth of bare

(1) The desert where Jesus Christ fasted during forty days, which procured it the name of the Quarantaine, is situated in the mountains of Jericho, at about a mile from this town, and towards the east bank of the Jordan. The mountain of the Quarantaine is one of the highest on the north side, presenting a deep abyss, hollowed out of the base as if to prevent access to it; from the west to the north it exhibits a succession of steep rocks, which open in several places, and contain caves. The only way to reach the fourth part of the height of the mountain from the foot, is by a slope extremely steep, covered with pebbles, which roll about under one's feet. When you have reached this fourth part, you find a small path, very narrow, which ends in a small flight of steps, surrounded by horrible precipices, to the top of which you must climb, with the greatest danger, by means of a few stones which project a little in certain places, to which you are obliged to cling with feet and hands, and if these supports should fail, you would fall from the height of the rock down a frightful precipice.—(Voyages de Jesus Christ, 11me voyage.)

rocks, where the bird finds not a blade of moss for its nest, or a wild berry to support its little life, where all is stones and heat! What anguish did she feel when the tempest howled out of doors! Where was Jesus? What was he doing, alone and unsheltered, on those high mountains of Jericho, where the steep paths, full of rolling stones, wind among frightful precipices?[1] No means of saving himself if his foot slipped on the edge of an abyss! No help if during this fast, so complete, so long, so little proportioned to the strength of nature, he fell through weakness on the way. These forty days were to Mary forty ages,—maternal anxiety making of every minute thus passed an eternity; but Jesus returned to Nazareth, with his disciples, and his beloved presence was to Mary like the breath of spring after the cold of winter.

Then it was that the marriage took place at Cana, in Galilee. The married couple, who were related to the Blessed Virgin,[2] invited Mary, Jesus, and his disciples. All of them accepted this cordial invitation, and the Virgin, ever good and obliging, took the lead in forwarding the preparations for this feast, where the national customs required a certain degree of splendour. The assembled company was numerous, and the family were poor; the bridegroom had not calculated well, and the bottles of wine were almost exhausted, when our Lord, who was pleased to elevate marriage to the rank of holy things, by purifying it by his holy presence, entered the banqueting-room, followed by Peter, Andrew, Philip, and Nathanael, four young fishermen,

(1) The sacred retreat where the God-man spent forty days is a natural cave, which is reached only after climbing up a path cut in the rock. A recess has been made in one side of it, as if to set up an altar. Some frescoes are to be seen there, almost effaced, which represent angels. A thick wall encloses this sort of chapel, which is lighted by a window, from which you cannot look down without terror.—(Ibid.)

(2) The oriental tradition, which the Mahometans have received from the Christians, is that St. John the Evangelist was the bridegroom of the marriage feast of Cana, and that, after witnessing the miracle which Jesus Christ performed there, he immediately left his spouse to follow him.—(D'Herbelot, Biblioth. Orientale, t. ii.) Baronius, t. i. p. 106. Mald. (in Joan.) also adopts this opinion, which we do not guarantee.

whom he had impressed with confidence in his character. The wine failed entirely in the middle of the repast, and Mary, having been the first to perceive it upon a sign of distress given by the new married couple, turned her head towards Jesus, who was seated near her, and said to him significantly, "They have no wine."

Jesus answered in a low and emphatic voice, "Woman, what is it to me and to thee? My hour is not yet come."[1]

The Virgin, wishing to spare her relatives a humiliation which would have filled them with confusion, did not consider this a refusal; she judged that, if the hour of manifestation was not come, CHRIST, notwithstanding his austere words, would anticipate it for her sake; and with that faith which would remove mountains, she said softly to the waiters, "Whatsoever he shall say to you, do ye." Now there were set there six water-pots of stone, according to the manner of purifying of the Jews; and by the command of Jesus, they were filled to the brim from a neighbouring spring; and this water was changed into delicious wine.

Thus it was that the Blessed Virgin had the first fruits of the miracles of her divine Son, and that her intercession caused even the will of God to bend in her favour.

The miracle of Cana was soon followed by many others, which marked the high and providential mission of our Saviour with the seal of the Divinity. At his voice the storms were hushed, human infirmities disappeared, the devils sunk back to their gloomy kingdom, dead bodies came forth from the tomb, and, upon that corner of the earth where his blessed feet trod, there was made a great healing of all sufferings of soul and body.[2]

(1) The answer of our Saviour to his Holy Mother must have been, as we should say, *aside;* the gospel narrative gives us so to understand. It was impossible in the outset that Jesus Christ should have made this enigmatical answer aloud to his mother; the guests, who were not in the secret, would have considered it as something very harsh to Mary. It is evident that the waiters, by their listening to what the Blessed Virgin said to them, were ignorant of the apparent refusal of our Saviour.

(2) A Mussulman poet has depicted in graceful verses this command, which

They came to him from Sidon, Tyre, Idumea, and Arabia; and crowds of people, gathering together on his way, kissed the hem of his garments, and humbly begged of him health and life,—things which God alone can give.

Mary, whom our Lord had not yet thought fit to associate with him in his painful and wandering life, heard these extraordinary accounts with a joy mingled with trouble and an uneasy admiration. Her alarm was well founded; for, if the people followed the Messias, loading him with benedictions, the Pharisees, the Scribes, and the princes of the synagogue began to be greatly scandalised,—worthy souls!—at the conduct of the Son of God. He forgave sins; blasphemy! He consoled and converted sinners; degradation! He healed the sick on the Sabbath-day; crying and notorious impiety! His doctrine fell from his lips like a beneficent dew, and not like stormy rain; then he was not at all like the ancient prophets! He preached humility, the forgiveness of injuries, voluntary poverty, alms given for God's sake, universal charity.—What novel doctrine was all this! A multitude of enemies arose up against him every time that he preached, whether in the desert or in the cities. He could not attack hypocrisy without coming into collision with the Pharisees, or declaim against avarice without alienating from himself the doctors of the law; the discontented, ever ready to contrive dark plots which broke out into mad and sanguinary revolts, were scandalised at him for not preaching sedition against Cæsar; the Herodians accused him of aspiring to the throne; and the Sadducees could

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Jesus Christ exercised over the maladies of the soul; the following is a translation from the French version of D'Herbelot:—

"The heart of the afflicted draws all its consolation from thy words.

"The soul recovers its life and vigour from only hearing thy name pronounced.

"If the mind of man can ever rise to the contemplation of the mysteries of the Divinity,

"It is from thee that he derives his light to know them, and it is thou who givest him the attraction with which he is penetrated."

A Christian could not have explained himself more energetically, observes the learned orientalist.

not endure that he should proclaim eternal life. These men, divided in views, creeds, and political interests, made a truce with their absurd antipathies out of hatred for the *Galilean;* they girded themselves with the intention of injuring him, and pressed forward against him to destroy him. Every word was a snare, every smile was a treason. Some treated him unsparingly as an impostor and a *Samaritan;* others gently hinted that he was a madman; the dense mass of the envious, tired of the praises which the people gave to this new prophet, and unable to deny his miracles, disputed his claim to them, to give the honour of them to Satan. "If he casts out devils," said they, "it is by Beelzebub, the prince of devils: *in Beelzebub, principe dæmoniorum, ejicit dæmonia.*"[1] These vague rumours alarmed Mary, and the bad spirit of her own neighbourhood was little calculated to encourage her. Of all the cities of Galilee, Nazareth was the most unbelieving and hardened against the sacred Word; of all the families of Nazareth, the family of Jesus Christ was apparently the least disposed to accept him for the kingly Messias. As the divine parturition of the Virgin had never been revealed to her relations, and as the miracles which had been displayed during the infancy of the Lord had taken place in distant countries, they saw nothing in the supposed son of Joseph but a young Israelite without learning, brought up among themselves, fed like themselves, more poorly lodged, more simply clad, and living from day to day by very hard labour, which connected him only with the lower classes. Christ, who would ennoble poverty by taking it for his own portion, suffered the consequences of the position

(1) The *Methnevi-Manevi*, speaking of the impotent and envious hatred of the Jews against Jesus Christ, expresses its opinion in these terms against those attacks which are so common against all that meet with success,—attacks which are, in the end, hurtful to those only who make them. "The moon sheds her light and the dog barks," says the Persian author, "but the barking of the dog does not hinder the moon from shining. Sweepings are cast into the current of a river, and these ordures swim on the surface of the water without stopping or disturbing it. The Messias, on the one hand, raises the dead to life, and you see, on the other, the Jews, gnawed with envy, biting their nails and plucking their beards."—(Hussein-Vaëz. D'Herbelot, Bibl. Orient.)

which he had chosen. "*His brethren*," says St. John, "did not believe in him."[1] The fame of the miracles which accompanied the preaching of the gospel astonished these obstinate Nazareans, without the power to convince them. Knowing that Jesus was saluted throughout Galilee by the dangerous title of son of David, and that crowds of two or three thousand persons ran to hear him, they were afraid that these numerous assemblies would give umbrage to Herod Antipas, and that they themselves might be molested on account of the young prophet. With this idea they said publicly that Jesus was insane, and swore that they would take him back to Nazareth well guarded. Concealing this family conspiracy from Mary, they induced her to come with them to Capharnaum, that they might approach him under the authority of her name.[2]

The Messias was teaching in the synagogue, in the midst of a crowd of attentive and silent hearers, when the Nazareans arrived. Displaying ostentatiously an authority which they were not sorry to magnify in the sight of the multitude, as St. John Chrysostom remarks, they deliberately caused our Saviour to be informed that his brethren and his mother were outside inquiring for him; but Jesus reading the secret thoughts of his relations according to the flesh, and laying hold of this circumstance to extend the limits of the old law by adopting solemnly and without respect of persons the whole family of mankind, made this admirable answer to the indiscreet message of his relatives, "Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?" Then casting his eyes over his numerous disciples, "My mother and my brethren," he exclaimed, "are they who hear the word of God, and do it." After this severe reprimand, which the sons of Alpheus may have understood, the Son of God went out immediately, says St. John Chrysostom, "to pay his mother all the honour which propriety required of him."

When he had greeted Mary, and remained some time with

(1) St. John, c. vii. v. 5.
(2) St. Mark, c. iii. v. 21, 31, 32, 33, 34, and 35.

her on the sea-shore, our Saviour went up into a ship, whence he began to teach the people. The Virgin, hidden among the crowd, but profoundly attentive, heard in religious silence the parable of the sower. The Nazareans, petrified by the irresistible eloquence and superhuman dignity of Jesus Christ, asked themselves, in surprise, if he really was the son of Mary: they experienced that sort of fascination which charms the serpent of the American savannahs, when he hears in the depths of the woods soft music which attracts him. They had come with the celerity of fear, with the eloquence of egotism, with the arrogance of superiority, to turn Christ from his compromising and perilous mission, and they were so far disabled by his very look as to be afraid to open their mouths in his presence. This is clearly indicated by the text of St. Mark, who, after initiating us into their hostile intentions, does not give us anywhere to understand that they even dared to speak to our Lord.

Some time after this, Jesus returned to Nazareth. Great was the joy of the Blessed Virgin. To see her Son seated on the same mat on which he sat in his childhood, eating the bread which he had broken as he blessed it; to take him stealthily to the bedside of some poor sick person, whom he restored to health, enjoining him secresy; to see him powerful in words and works, he who had so long been the man of silence and labour; this was too much happiness in the cup of her existence! Accordingly God, who afflicts those whom he loves, soon mixed with it a drop of gall. On the Sabbath-day, the Son and the Mother went together to the synagogue. A great concourse of people had assembled there to see and hear Jesus; but the eagerness of the Nazareans had not that character of confidence and respectful attention which Christ had so often met with elsewhere. There they were, scandalised already at what the Son of Mary was to say and do, and admirably disposed to stone him if opportunity offered.

There are countries decidedly hostile to all that does them honour, even till the grass grows upon the tomb of what they envy.

One of the ancients, however, handed to the Saviour of men the book of the prophet Isaias; and Jesus, unrolling the parchment, read this passage, with simple gracefulness and marvellous dignity,—"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me: wherefore he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the contrite heart; to preach deliverance to the captives, and sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of reward." Having closed the book, he sat down, and speaking with that animated and natural eloquence which made so strong an impression upon his hearers, he applied the oracle relating to the Messias to himself, and taught, not like a disciple of the synagogue, but as the actual master of the synagogue. A low murmur ran through the assembly. Some were in admiration at the power and gracefulness of his words; others, faithful to their system of contemptuous defamation, said aloud, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" And Jesus, penetrating into their thoughts, and reading as in an open book those false and envious hearts, hurled at them those words, so true, which have become proverbial, "A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house." As he knew that they had a mind to ask him for prodigies, like those of which Capharnaum had been the theatre, he told them plainly that their unbelief had made them unworthy of them, and that to obtain miracles, these must be solicited with faith. Thence, in allusion to the propagation of his gospel, and to that wild olive engrafted on the old trunk of the synagogue, which symbolised the vocation of the Gentiles: "In truth I say to you, there were many widows in the days of Elias in Israel, when heaven was shut up three years and six months: when there was a great famine throughout all the land: and to none of them was Elias sent, but to a widow at Sarepta of Sidon. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elias the prophet: and none of them were cleansed but Naaman the Syrian."

These last words were the drop of water which makes the vessel run over. Wounded in their national pride, in their here-

ditary antipathies, in their traditional expectations, all those of the synagogue were filled with anger which called for blood. "And they rose up and thrust him out of their city: and they brought him to the brow of the hill, whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong."

Seated among the women of the people in a latticed tribune, the Virgin had observed, with anxiety mingled with fear, the increased progress of the storm. Reading the sinister projects of the Nazareans in their haggard eyes and furious gestures, she did not hesitate to brave danger to force a passage to her Son; but her strength deceived her courage. Those Jews ran,—they who had always light feet to shed blood; and Mary, trembling like a leaf, scarcely able to support herself, walked at a distance after them, as if in a dream. She sees Jesus on the top of the steep rock which overhangs a frightful precipice; she hears afar off cries for death; her knees give way under her; a mist spreads over her sight; her voice expires in a sorrowful moaning; she falls, broken down like a blossomed bough which the tempest has torn off in its course, and remains stretched out with her face on the ground upon the hill.[1]

Meanwhile the wolves, furious in pursuit of the lamb, had been deceived in their expectation; the hour of sacrifice had not yet struck for the Son of Man, and no one could take his life unless he gave it. Striking this murderous crew with blindness,[2]

(1) Between the steep mountain from which the Jews had formed the design to cast down Jesus Christ, and the town of Nazareth, "You perceive halfway," says F. de Geramb, "the ruins of a monastery formerly inhabited by religious, and those of a very fine church, built by St. Helen, and dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, under the name of Our Lady del Tremore (of terror). According to some, Mary was already in this place when the Jews were dragging her son towards the top of the mountain to throw him down from it. According to others, at the news of the murderous project of these madmen, she had run thither in great haste, but had arrived too late; seized with terror, 'she could proceed no farther.'"

(2) The oldest heretics, opening the door to modern rationalism, which decks itself out in the old rags, without acknowledgment, insisted that our Lord had passed through, by means of an illusion produced by a fog, "illudere per caliginem." Tertullian strongly opposes this supposition.—(Adv. Marcion., 4, 8.)

Jesus passed through the midst of his enemies without being known by them, and took again the road to Capharnaum, where his mother, Mary of Cleophas, and the sons of Alpheus came to rejoin him.

After having preached the gospel in the environs of the beautiful lake of Tiberias, the waves of which shine like light, and wrought the great miracle of the multiplication of the loaves in the desert of Bethsaida, Jesus reascended the Jordan with his disciples to go to Cæsarea Philippi, the ancient Dan of Nephtali, the name of which Philip, the son of Herod, had lately changed; and he visited as he passed the towns and villages situated on his way.

It was probably at this time—for Euthymius,[1] who relates this traditionary fact, leaves the date undecided—that the waters of the Jordan, already sanctified, beheld an affecting ceremony. Jesus, the Virgin, and the apostles, directed their steps, one day at sunrise, towards this deeply-enclosed river, which runs through two lakes, says Tacitus, and rushes into the third.[2] Magnificent vegetation adorned its banks; islets rising here and there from its humid bosom, displayed themselves in the midst of its gilded waves, like graceful baskets of verdure, fruits, and flowers; blue herons hovered over these flowery isles, where ringdoves and white turtle doves still hung their nests of moss upon the branches of the wild pomegranate-trees. The dew sparkled upon the green branches of the willows, like a shower of pale diamonds; and the rushes of the Jordan, which sometimes conceal tigers, bent softly beneath the light breeze, which moved the tops of the palm-trees, from which hung fine bunches of dates of the colour of coral. In the distance, on the opposite bank, troops of gazelles were seen bounding on the declivities of high mountains, grey

(1) According to St. Euthymius, our Lord baptized only the Blessed Virgin and St. Peter, who afterwards baptized the other apostles. "Some," says this abbot, who flourished in Palestine in the fourth century, "have written that Jesus Christ himself baptized the Virgin and Peter."

(2) "Nec Jordanes pelago accipitur; sed unum atque alterum lacum integer perfluit; tertio retinetur."—(Taciti, Historiarum, lib. v.)

and streaked with fire; and in the sandy plain were flying along, on their coursers fleet as the wind, some wild sons of the desert, armed with those long lances of cane from the banks of the Euphrates, which they used from the times near to the deluge, if we believe the legends of Persia.[1] Clouds of violet of the richest tint, or of delicate rose-colour paler at the edges, floated like flowers in the deep blue of the sky, and the nightingale was singing in the tall sycamores which overshadow the sacred river of Palestine: nature held a festival for the baptism of Mary.

The Virgin was dressed in white, according to the custom of the Hebrews when they individually took part in any religious ceremony, and she stood grave and profoundly recollected by the side of her Son and Saviour: they both went down into the river. Then, lifting up with his divine hand the Oriental veil of his fair and holy Mother, Christ looked upon her with his sweet and penetrating look of infinite tenderness; then he poured upon the Virgin's forehead the sacred water of regeneration, and baptized her in the name of the Trinity,—He who was himself one of the Three Divine Persons.

It was then that the Blessed Virgin broke through her solitary habits to follow her Son in his journeys. She had served him for thirty years, on a foreign soil and in the land of her fathers; she had worked for him, wept over him, suffered for him, and adored him without ever failing, night and morning in his cradle while he still slept there, as Albert the Great informs us. It was natural that following his persecuted fortunes, she should leave the peaceful roof which had witnessed her birth to walk in his blessed footsteps, while he preached the gospel to the Hebrews. Amid the agitations of this life of trouble and alarm, the Virgin was admirable as ever. Loving Jesus more than any mother ever loved her child, and alone able to carry this extreme love without sin to the farthest limits of adoration, she never intruded her

(1) Reeds grow on the banks of the Euphrates which are almost equal to the bamboos of the Indies. From the earliest times, the Arabs and Assyrians have made lances of them.—(Firdousi, the Book of Kings.)

presence upon him to divert the short and precious moments of his mission of regeneration in favour of her own maternal tenderness; never did she speak to him of her fatigues, fears, sinister forebodings, or personal wants. Mary was not only a holy dove hiding in the clefts of a rock—a pure virgin called to feed with her milk, and cradle in her arms, a heavenly guest; she was a valiant woman, whom the Lord delighted to place in turn in every situation of life, in order to leave to the daughters of Eve an example to follow, and a model to imitate.

It would not have been proper for the Mother of God to follow Jesus and his apostles alone throughout Judea; therefore Mary of Cleophas, the mother of James, Simon, Joseph, and Jude, commonly called the brothers of the Lord; Salome, mother of the sons of Zebedee, whom the Lord especially loved; Joanna, wife of the steward of the tetrarch, and several rich women of Galilee, who had made themselves poor for Jesus Christ, formed the companions of Mary. One among them, a Jewess, young, rich, of noble birth and remarkable beauty, was most affectionately attentive to the divine Mother of *her Lord*. This woman, whose heart, strong but assaulted by storms, like the waves of the Egean Sea, had burned with a thousand impure flames in the sight of the world, and defied public opinion with mockery and disdain, had come, submissive and penitent, to lay down her proud head at the feet of Christ, and to beg of him whom she confessed to be her God, the cure of the maladies of her soul. And the chaste love of the Lord had absorbed all her insane amours, all the worldly attachments of the young lady of Magdalum. She had trampled under her feet her collars of pearls, her chains of gold and precious stones; sold her country house, situated among the rose-laurels which fringe the beautiful Sea of Galilee, and now, with no other ornament than a dress of coarse cloth, and her fine black hair, with which she had wiped the Lord's feet, the young patrician, rich in her alms-deeds, adorned with new virtues, shed her penitent tears on the pure and compassionate bosom of Mary. The immaculate Virgin had received in her arms and pressed to her heart the grievous sinner, and cultivated in this

soil, fertile but long left waste, those flowers which expand for heaven.

After many sufferings, many terrors too long to relate, the Virgin entered Jerusalem, the fatal city, in company with Jesus Christ, to celebrate the last Passover which the Lord kept with his disciples. She saw the inhabitants of the city of kings come in crowds to meet the son of David, who came to them full of meekness, riding as the young princes of his race formerly did, and receiving with benignity the simple honours which this multitude, eager to behold their prophet, spontaneously offered him; for Jesus Christ never rejected the humble testimonies of gratitude and love which were offered to him by his creatures. However small were these pledges of affection and gratitude, they were received with a divine goodness the moment that they proceeded from the heart.

Magdalen, examining by turns *her Lord* and that multitude of people who made the air resound with their *hosannas*, wept silently beneath her veil. Mary, too, had her eyes moist with tears; but her look was turned to the north-west, in the direction of Calvary.

CHAPTER XVII.

MARY ON CALVARY

The palms which the children of the Hebrews had cast beneath the feet of Christ still strewed with their green tufts the rugged road of Bethania; the echo of the valley of cedars[1] still muttered the dying sounds of those cries of triumph and joy, with which the daughters of Sion had saluted the *King* who came to them *poor*, when Jerusalem was deeply moved by a new event of great and sad importance.

(1) *Valley of Cedars*, the ancient name of the valley of Josaphat.

The princes of the priests, the senators, and Pharisees sought to get possession, even at the price of gold, and without shrinking from domestic treason, of a *great criminal*, who, as they said, placed both religion and the state in danger. This man must indeed have been very dangerous, since these *honourable* personages had bound themselves to an extraordinary fast to lay hold of him,[1] and had indeed distributed on this occasion some alms throughout the city with sound of trumpet. The Pharisees, those *conscientious* Jews, who plundered none but the uncircumcised, and who would have left their neighbour at the bottom of a pit on the sabbath-day, though they would have speedily drawn out their ox or their ass, had undertaken to spread among the people—whom it is so easy to make impression upon, and to deceive—frightful reports and vague rumours, which had thrown them into a kind of feverish anxiety, from which they could not free themselves but by a fit of ferocity. Things being thus prepared, a well-armed troop were seen, one evening, coming down from Mount Moria, in which were some senators, and which was commanded by the captain of the guards of the temple;[2] the troop of servants of the princes of the priests came after, and at the head of this battalion, which marched on with a measured step by the light of those large lanterns which the Asiatics fix upon long poles, to raise them up high, and of some resinous torches, was a man with a low forehead, an irresolute look, and an abject countenance, whose girdle was swelled out with gold robbed from the poor,[3] to which he already added in imagination the thirty pieces of silver which he

(1) This anecdote is found in the Toldos, published by Huldric, p. 56 and 60.

(2) This office is known by the gospel, which often speaks of these captains of the temple, who must be distinguished from the Roman commandant, who kept guard with his cohort round this great edifice to prevent crowds, and those disorderly acts to which the multitude might give occasion. These captains of the temple necessarily were Jews, and were taken from the priestly families; to them were confided the care and the keys of the temple, to provide for the safety of the treasury and the sacred vessels: by right of his birth this officer had the liberty to enter into all the counsels of the priests.—(Basn., liv. i. c. 4.)

(3) "Then one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, he that was about to betray him, said, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? Now he said this, not because he cared for the poor, but because he

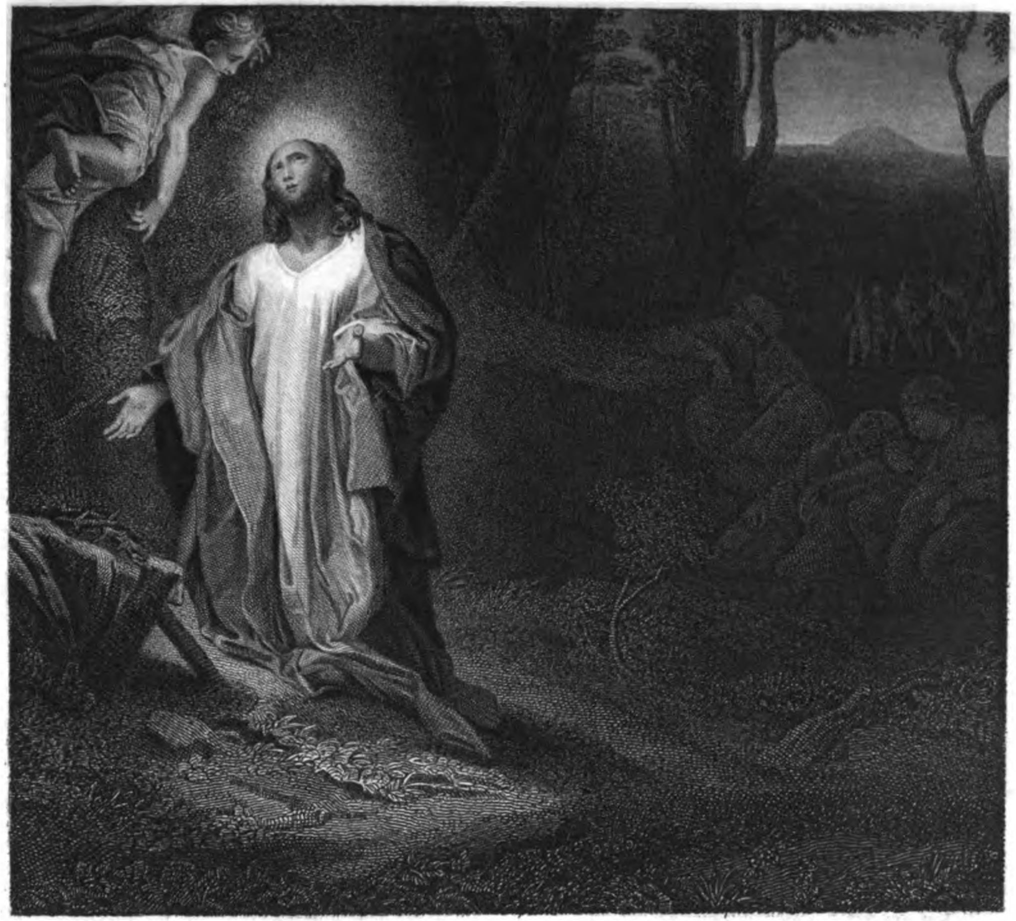
was to earn, by delivering up to the princes of the synagogue—too Jewish to pay for his treason beforehand—his master, his friend, his God! For it was the son of David, the triumpher but a few days before, Jesus of Nazareth, the great prophet of Galilee, at whose voice greedy death gave up his prey, and whose commands the winds and the waves respected, whom the ruffians of the chief priests and the Pharisees were going in search of upon the Mount of Olives, whither he retired at night after teaching in the temple, as St. Luke relates. They had not dared to arrest him in open daylight, because they feared some resistance on the part of that multitude of disciples who came to hear him early in the morning beneath the porch of Solomon.

The armed troop, headed by the Iscariot, crossed the ravine where flows the Cedron, that torrent of dark waters,[1] which witnessed the passage of King David, when he fled with a handful of faithful servants from the rebels in the pay of his son Absalom. While the soldiers of the temple followed, silent and savage, along the banks of the torrent in which their torches were reflected, in order to reach the heights of Gethsemane, and while the night wind shook the dishevelled tops of the willows, which were soon to see Judas hanging upon one of their branches,—a punishment too light for such a traitor, but which is continually increased by the undying contempt of successive generations upon the globe,—a sad and solemn scene was passing in that garden of olives where the worthless apostle went in search of his master on purpose to destroy him.

After praying a long time, on his face on the ground, and undergoing that frightful agony which covered his divine forehead with a sweat of blood, Christ had risen up with submissive resignation to the awful will of his Father, and quite prepared to drink the chalice of bitterness to the dregs. He raised up his large,

was a thief, and having the purse, carried what was put therein."—(St. John xii. v. 4, 5, 6.)

(1) The *Cedron* is a torrent which runs down the valley of Josaphat, between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives. It was called *Cedron*, because it has its course in deep and dark places; its Hebrew name signifies *tenebrosus fuit.*



Wedgwood

CHRIST PRAYING IN THE GARDEN.

soft, and piercing eyes to the starry heavens, the stars of which told that it was midnight, and high in which shone the moon, that fair lamp of the firmament, whose useful light is blessed by the children of Abraham in their prayers;[1] she was then at the full, and cast a sheet of resplendent light upon that austere passage, where the dark mountains stood out from the limpid blue of heaven. Jerusalem, half-drowned in shade, and splendidly lighted up in places, sent forth afar the aromatic perfume of the rare plants of her gardens, and waved in the breath of the breeze her clusters of palm-trees, out of which arose white towers of marble. The silence was profound on the side of the mountains, but a slight murmur arose from the bottom of the valley:—Jesus suddenly started. There they are, he thought, and he slowly moved towards the place where he had left three of his apostles, whom he had chosen from all the rest to share his solitary night-watch. Alas! fatigue, or the lulling breath of the wind which made the grey foliage of the olive-trees rustle, had gradually made these negligent sentinels fall asleep. Jesus beheld them asleep for a moment with a holy feeling of grief; he had announced to them that his death was near, that the hour of peril was come, and they were asleep—they, his kinsmen, his friends, his chosen disciples, to all appearance indifferent about his danger or his death! . . . . . . O the vanity of benefits of ties of blood and friendship! . . . . . . They were awake enough on Thabor at the hour of the glorious transfiguration, but they slept in the hour of trial and distress!

A confused noise was heard in the hollow path which led up

(1) The day of the new moon is a festival day for the Hebrews; the women abstain from work, and the devout fast the preceding day. After reciting a number of prayers in the synagogue, they take a repast, at which they are very merry. Three days after, the Jews assemble on a platform, where they look steadfastly at the moon, and bless God by a long prayer for having created it, and for renewing it, to teach the Israelites that they ought to become new creatures: "O moon! blessed be thy Creator, blessed be He who made thee!" and then they jump three times, as high as they can, and say to the moon, "As we leap towards thee, without being able to touch thee, may our enemies rise up against us without reaching us! . . . ."—(Basn., liv. vii. c. 16.)

to the little village of Gethsemane; and soon the glare of torches shone upon the trees. Then Jesus, leaning over his apostles, who were still asleep, said to them in a low but deep voice, "Arise, let us go! Behold, he that betrayeth me is at hand!" He had hardly pronounced these words, when Judas and his band arrived. Coming up to Jesus, with boldness in his eyes, and the smile of hypocrisy on his lips, he pointed him out to the hostile troop who were in search of him, by giving him that sacrilegious kiss which has taken his name. It was the signal agreed upon. Jesus Christ received the traitor with kindness, and said to him with meekness which pierced to the quick, "Friend, whereto art thou come?"

Whereto was he come? . . . . He was come to earn the thirty sicles of silver of the synagogue. Avarice, which is a cold and calculating passion, commits ten times more crimes than violence, and much blacker crimes.

Judas had not time to answer this embarrassing question, for all the rest advancing, fell upon Jesus and laid hold on him. Then anger arose in the heart of Ben-Cephas,[1] the prince of the apostles; he drew his sword, and struck with it one of the servants of the high priest; but Jesus, restraining that arm which was the only one raised in his defence, commanded that the sword should be returned to its scabbard. "How then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that so it must be done?" The Lamb of God desired to be immolated for the sins of the world.

Then was heard in this enclosed spot mingled sounds of hurried footsteps, broken boughs, and cries of alarm; and a number of men were seen leaping over the low wall, scarcely three feet high,[2] which surrounded the garden: they were the disciples flying away! . . . .

(1) *Peter Ben-Cephas* (Peter, son of Peter); it is by this name that the prince of the apostles is known in the East.

(2) The garden of Gethsemane or of Olives, at the foot of the mountain of that name, is surrounded by a wall three feet high; its length is two hundred paces, by a hundred and forty broad. There is a rock in it, forming a reddish-coloured cave, where it is said the three apostles fell asleep.—(Voyages de Jesus



Vandyke — J. C. Armytage

ECCE HOMO.

The hostile troop, after binding Jesus like a criminal, returned by the road to the Holy City, and went in the direction of the stone bridge which the Asmonean princes had thrown over the Cedron; but the people of Jerusalem, who had come out in crowds, already occupied it, and tradition relates that Jesus was dragged through this channel of water; which accomplished to the letter the prophecy, "He shall drink of the torrent in the way." The sacred footsteps of our Saviour, and the impression of one of his knees, are marked in the bed and on the stone margin of Cedron; at least this is asserted by the Christians of Jerusalem, who still show them. After ascending the hill of Sion, they entered Jerusalem by the Sterquilinian Gate, and repaired to Caiphas, the high priest, where the scribes and ancients were assembled. The chief priests and scribes then asked Jesus if he was the Christ. "If I shall tell you," our Saviour meekly answered, "you will not believe me." "Art thou the Son of God?" asked Caiphas. "I am," replied Jesus. "He hath blasphemed!" cried the high priest, rending his garments. "He is guilty of death!" said the scribes and Pharisees.

"Then did they spit in his face," and they struck him with their fists, and gave him blows, while they cried out to him, in derision, "Prophecy, Christ, who is it that struck thee?"

During this time Peter, who had sworn to die rather than abandon him, denied him thrice in the court of the high priest!

The next day, the chief priests and Pharisees dragged Jesus before Pontius Pilate, who was supremely odious to them since the affair of the imperial standards, which he had introduced by night into Jerusalem;[1] but as they hated the Son of God much more, and as the Romans alone could condemn him to death,[2]

Christ, 44 voyage.) Its name of Gethsemane is derived from the goodness of the soil; in Hebrew Gethsemane signifies "fertile valley."

(1) Josephus, Ant. Jud., liv. xviii. c. 4.

(2) Before Judea had become subject to the Romans, the sanhedrim possessed the right of life and death; but those conquerors deprived them of that privilege. It was the custom of the Romans to leave the conquered nations their temples and their gods; but in civil matters, they were obliged to follow the laws and orders of the republic. At the time when Jesus Christ was condemned, the

they were resigned to appear at the pretorium of this idolater, after taking the most minute precautions to avoid exposing themselves to any unclean contact with his garments, his standards, and even his tribunal, which would have rendered them impure for the whole day. After doing everything, therefore, to avoid so serious an inconvenience, these *scrupulous* men accused Jesus of having perverted the people by his doctrine, of having opposed their paying tribute to Cæsar, and, finally, of having taken the seditious title of the King of the Jews.—As many falsehoods as words.

Jesus met these false accusations only with silence. Pilate, convinced of the profound wickedness of the accusers, and the perfect innocence of the accused, would have saved Jesus; he did not succeed. The Pharisees, skilful in raising popular tumults, worked up the people, who seditiously demanded the death of the descendant of their ancient kings; and the governor, who knew well how to appease the clamours of the Jews, in a way perfectly oriental, when he chose to do so, was content tamely to defend against the madmen who wanted to force from him an unjust judgment, the innocent man, whom he ought to have protected with firmness. Wearied with their clamours, overcome by their persistence, the Roman washed his hands of the sentence which he pronounced.[1] After which,—no doubt with a view to excuse

Romans were absolutely masters of temporal jurisdiction, and the authority of the Jewish senate was limited to affairs purely ecclesiastical. The Talmudists recognised it, for they acknowledged that the power of judging was taken away from the senate forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem, that is, three years before the death of Jesus Christ.—(Basn., liv. vii. c. 4.)

(1) The decree pronounced by Pilate against our Lord is preserved at Jerusalem. We give it here, not as an authentic document, but as a local tradition:—Jesum Nazarenum, subversorem gentis, contemptorem Cæsaris, et falsum Messiam, ut majorum suæ gentis testimonio probatum est, ducite ad communis supplicii locum, et cum ludibrio regiæ magistatis in medio duorum latronum affigite. I, lictor, expedi cruces. "Jesus of Nazareth, the subverter of the people, the despiser of Cæsar, and the false Messias, as it has been proved by the testimony of the ancients of his nation, take ye to the common place of punishment, and crucify him in derision of his royal majesty between two thieves. Go, lictor, prepare the crosses."—(Adricom., In descript. Jesu.)

himself for his show of clemency towards Jesus Christ, and to win back the hearts of the populace of Jerusalem, whom he had recently had beaten by his lictors in a commotion,[1] on occasion of the sacred treasure, which he wanted to grasp largely, under pretence of building an aqueduct which they did not want,—he had the Son of David and Solomon scourged with rods, while the deicidal people applauded, who had dared to take upon their own heads, and those of their children, the terrible responsibility of his death. This done, he delivered him up, at the same time admiring and lamenting over him,[2] to the insults of a soldiery whom the princes of the synagogue, who had a positive horror of them, had condescended to corrupt, that their own hatred might be the better served;[3] for they knew how to hate strongly, these

(1) Pilate undertook to build an aqueduct with the money of the sacred treasure, to bring water to Jerusalem from a distance of two hundred furlongs. The people, violently irritated against the Roman governor, whose intentions they discovered, assembled in large bodies of several thousand men in the streets and the public squares of Jerusalem, which they made ring with vociferations against Pilate, and there were some even, says Josephus, who exasperated the governor by gross insults; as it always happens with people in commotion. Pilate, who was not alarmed at a little, made his own people take great bludgeons under their garments, and surround the populace; when the seditious, after taking breath, recommenced their clamours and insults, Pilate gave the signal to his men to lay on them, and they began to strike more than they were ordered to do, and without any distinction gave great blows with their cudgels as well to those who were silent as to those who made a noise. These poor people, who were unarmed, were thus inhumanly treated, adds Josephus, with compassionate sympathy for the Jewish outbreak; some were killed, others wounded, and by this means was the tumult appeased.—(Joseph. Ant. Jud., lib. xviii. c. 4.)

(2) Tiberias, in consequence of the accounts which came to him from Pontius Pilate, proposed to the senate to grant divine honours to Jesus Christ; Tertullian relates it as a well-known fact in his Apology, which he presented to the senate in the name of the Church, and he would not have been willing to weaken a cause so good as his by things where it would have been so easy to confound him. —(Tertull. Apolog. 5; Euseb., Hist. Eccl. ii. 2.)

(3) M. Salvador would fain exculpate his co-religionists, by imputing to the Roman soldiers the unheard-of outrages which Jesus received in the pretorium; but it is clear that the Romans acted only by the instigation of the enemies of Jesus Christ. The following is the opinion of St. John Chrysostom on this subject:—"It is the Jews themselves who condemn Jesus to death, although they shelter themselves under the name of Pilate. 'They desire that his blood should fall upon themselves and upon their children.' It is they alone who direct all

zealots for the law of Moses, who would kill and divide CHRIST "for the love of God!"

When Jesus had arrived at the court of the pretorium, they made him sit down on a broken column,[1] and the whole cohort did their utmost to disport themselves with him in the most atrocious and insolent manner. It was the season when the dangerous rhamnus[2]—which long before had entangled in its thorny thickets the symbolical lamb for the sacrifice of Abraham[3]—was in full flower; one of the soldiers ran to gather a branch of it, and made a mock crown, the flowers of which were soon tinged with his blood, and every thorn gave him a deep and insupportable wound. After stripping him like a slave, they threw over his shoulders a purple rag, they put a reed in his hand for a sceptre, and they saluted, with bitter sarcasms and derisive genuflexions, that mockery of royalty. His whole body was but one wound, for the scourges with sharp points had made red pieces of his flesh fly off a long way in the hall of executions; spittle disfigured his face, where clots of dark blood settled down here and there from his wounded forehead, which his fettered hands could not reach! The chief priests, the doctors, and Pharisees, looked upon this scene with secret satisfaction; these *honourable* men regarded compassion as baseness of soul![4]

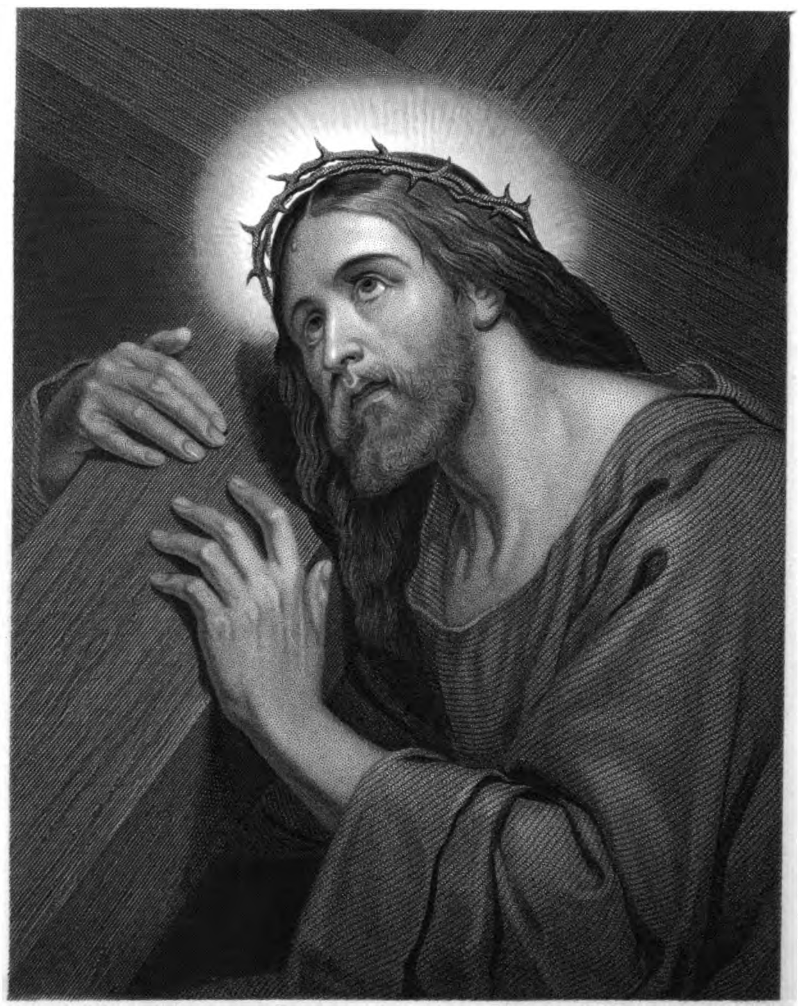
these insults against him, who bind him, who lead him away to Pilate, and who cause him to be dragged along so cruelly by the soldiers. Pilate had not ordered any of these things."—(Serm. 77, in Matt.)

(1) This pillar, of grey marble, being only two feet high, is at Rome, in the church of St. Praxedes.

(2) Some separate thorns of this crown, in the possession of individuals, are now recognised as the *rhamnus spina Christi* of Linnæus.

(3) St. Jerom (in Philem.) says that the ram which Abraham saw in the thorn-bush was the figure of Jesus Christ crowned with thorns.

(4) Basn., liv. vi. c. 17. The punishment of the whip was of very ancient usage among the Jews, and was not considered disgraceful. According to the Talmud, kings themselves were subjected to it on certain occasions. "Tradition informs us," says Maimonides, "that the king may not have more than eighteen wives; if he marries one above that number, let him be whipped. If he has more horses than he has need of for the service of his chariot, let him be whipped. If he amasses more gold and silver than he wants for the payment of his ministers, let him be whipped."—(Maimonid., Halach., Malach., c. 3.)



A. Scheffer — T. Knight

CHRIST BEARING HIS CROSS.

When the Pharisees thought that the idolatrous soldiers had degraded Jesus in the eyes of the people enough to destroy the idea of his divinity, the approach of the Sabbath obliging them to hurry, they took their victim, whom the Roman governor gave up to them with reluctance, and, after loading his bleeding and mangled shoulders with the enormous weight of the cross, they urged on, with the staves of their lances, his painful and slow march toward Calvary, where they were going to crucify him.

Crowds of spectators lined the streets and stopped up the ways: some openly showed a savage joy, and cried anathema upon the son of David; others pitied the fate of that youthful prophet, who had done nothing but good to men, and whom men had forsaken and betrayed. But these signs of barren sympathy made hardly any impression; the good wept in silence; all those whom he had fed with five loaves in the desert, those whom he had healed, those whom he had loved were there, lost in the crowd, and no voice protested against his punishment;[1] that one among the apostles who loved him most had cowardly denied him! the rest, with only one exception, had fled away and left him!

As he painfully passed down the long street which leads to the Judiciary Gate, a woman made her way through the crowd: this woman, remarkably beautiful, and bearing in her mild and sweet countenance the image of virtue, seemed wholly absorbed in unutterable grief; she suffered so much; she was so pale; her eyes, which had shed all their tears, cast a look so dead—a look of sorrow so holy upon the frightful wounds of our Saviour—that,

(1) We read in the Misnah that, in the time when the Jews were governed by their own laws, when a condemned person was conducted to the place of punishment, a herald of arms went before him, on horseback, making this proclamation,—"Such a one is condemned for such a crime; if any one can bring forward anything in his defence let him speak." If any one came forward, the criminal was taken back, and two judges, who walked one on each side of him, examined the validity of the reasons which it was attempted to substantiate; the prisoner might be led back in this manner as far as five times.—(Misnah, Tract. de Syned., c. vi. p. 233.) Jesus Christ being condemned by the Romans, could not avail himself of this national custom.

when they beheld her, the daughters of Jerusalem muttered with compassion, "Poor Mother!" She glided through the people, who made room for her by an instinctive feeling of pity and sympathy. Some of the Pharisees with hardened hearts called Jesus, bathed as he was in perspiration, and ready to die with fatigue beneath the cross, by insulting names; she did not hear them: the foreign soldiers who surrounded her Son made threatening signs to her; she did not see them: but when a number of lances, with their points directed to her breast, were thrust between her and Jesus, there came from her fixed and piercing eyes a lightning flash which revealed the blood of David, and her fine and inspired head assumed such an expression of sorrowful grandeur, and cool contempt of death, that the soldiers, overcome, slowly lowered their arms before the heroic and saintly woman. Savage as the life of the camp had made them, they remembered their own mothers.

Mary turned her trembling steps towards our Saviour; she fixed eyes full of anguish on that humiliated form, dragging himself along, bleeding and half clothed, beneath a heavy burthen; on that imposing, merciful, and mild countenance, which she would have feared to ruffle by the slight contact of her chaste lips, and which, now swollen, blue, covered with filth and blood, scarcely retained any longer the image of the Creator. She passed her hand in sorrow across his forehead, as if to make sure that she was not the sport of some horrible hallucination. Not a groan relieved her oppressed heart, no gesture of despair initiated the spectators in the mysteries of her agony; they only thought she was going to die: and indeed she would have died a thousand times during that solemn and heartrending pause, if He who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb had not divinely supported her. Jesus soon perceived that motionless and mute figure, a few paces from him; bending down before her, his forehead bowed beneath the burden of the cross, he pronounced the name of "Mother!" At that word, which sounded like a funeral knell in the ears of the holy Virgin, a sharp pain pierced through her heart; she was seen to stagger and turn pale; then, sinking

down, she fell at full length on those rough and reddened stones where Jesus had left traces of blood as he passed![1] . . . .

A young Galilean with a dark and dejected countenance, and a young woman drowned in tears, made themselves a passage to Mary; thanks to their attentions, the Virgin of sorrows recovered the use of her senses and the consciousness of that physical and moral martyrdom which no martyr, according to the Fathers, ever equalled. Doubtless John and Magdalen did everything to remove her from the scene of blood and death which was preparing on Golgotha; but their entreaties were useless; and rising with difficulty, Mary began to climb, beneath a burning sun, the steepest side of Calvary: it was the shortest way, and that which they had made Jesus follow.[2]

They had reached the fatal and hallowed place where the Lamb of God was about to satisfy the justice of incensed Heaven, by substituting himself for all other victims and loading himself with all our miseries. There was it that the great sacrifice was about to be offered, the efficacy of which goes back on the one hand to the original transgression, and reaches on the other in the night of future things, even to the consummation of ages. This small rocky declivity was the new altar, whence the blood

(1) Tradition, fortified by the authority of St. Boniface and St. Anselm, relates that Jesus Christ saluted his mother with these words, "*Salve, Mater!*" As we find the Blessed Virgin again at the foot of the cross, this tradition of the Fathers is very probable. "Faith is not opposed to these traditions," says M. de Chateaubriand; "they show how deeply the marvellous and sublime history of the passion is graven in the memory of men. Eighteen centuries have rolled away; persecutions without end, revolutions without number, have been unable to efface or conceal the trace of a mother coming to weep over her son." There was built, in memory of the Blessed Virgin's swooning away, a church which was consecrated under the name of Our Lady of Spasm. "It was there," says F. de Geramb, "that Mary, repulsed by the soldiers, met her Son painfully dragging along the ignominious wood on which he was about to die."

(2) This way, which formerly led to Calvary, and by which our Saviour passed, no longer exists: it is covered with houses, in the midst of which is found a large pillar which marks the ninth station. The fanaticism of the Turks has delighted in making the approach to it disagreeable by heaps of filth, in order to keep the Christians away.—(F. de Geramb, t. i. p. 363.)

of Christ was to flow in streams to wash away the sins of the world, and annul for ever the compact of perdition, which delivered us over at our birth to the angels of the abyss. But what had become of the sacred victim? Where did his executioners conceal him from the desolate eyes of his mother? Mary cast her anxious looks all over the bare mountain: the people she saw in expectation; the crosses laid down upon the ground, and workmen digging with perfect indifference the deep holes which were to receive the three instruments of punishment. . . . . . And Jesus, where was he then?

He appeared, but in what a condition!—stripped of the last of his garments, without a shred to cover his discoloured flesh and bleeding wounds,—he who was so chaste and pure! His executioners, dragging him ignominiously along, exposed him thus some time to the derision of the people; then the Just One laid himself down upon the cross,—that bed of honour offered to him by the gratitude of men as the price of his immense love! It was a spectacle too frightful to behold for those who loved him: they dragged Mary some paces off, into a sort of natural grotto, where she remained standing, white and cold as marble.[1] There came from without a confused noise, like that of the bees of Engaddi, when the Israelite shepherd drives them out of the hollow of their oak-trees. From time to time, in the midst of this gloomy recitative there arose all at once a tempest of shouts, cries of derision and frightful bursts of laughter: the populace of all nations has ever had ferocious instincts, but that of the Hebrews surpassed itself on this occasion.

In an interval of profound silence, employed, no doubt, in some new barbarity which captivated the attention of the multitude, a stroke of the hammer was heard,—a dull stroke, falling upon the wood and the bruised flesh. Magdalen, shuddering, pressed close to Mary, and the beloved disciple leaned instinc-

(1) Near the place where our Saviour was fastened to the cross by the hands of the executioners, is seen a chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Dolours. It was into this place that the Blessed Virgin retired during the cruel preparations for the death of her Son.—(F. de Geramb, t. i. p. 151.)



THE CRUCIFIXION.

tively against the side of the grotto. A second blow, duller, more stifled, and more ill-omened, was again heard; it was followed by two or three others, falling at regular intervals, and then all was told. "See, they are nailing him to the cross," coolly observed a Roman soldier. John and Magdalen exchanged looks of desolation; they were under a sentiment like that which is felt in the midst of a nocturnal tempest, when the cries of the shipwrecked, whom it is impossible to succour, are borne on the waves, and are extinguished, one after another, at the bottom of the waters. But Mary! . . . . . a cold pesrpiration spread over her frame, a convulsive trembling shook her limbs; she too, poor feeble woman, had just been crucified; for never did confessor, stretched upon the rack,—never did martyr in the midst of flames,—undergo in soul and body tortures so dreadful.

They soon distinguished the sharp friction of the cords on the pullies; the cross was slowly raised up in the air, and the Son of man, with his face turned towards those western lands, which had so long waited for the light, was planted like a standard in the sight of unbelieving nations: so it was written. Then the reprobate people gave a hoarse and prolonged roar of joy: "Hail, King of the Jews! If God loves him, let him deliver him! If thou art the Son of God, O Nazarean, come down!" And the thief crucified on his left hand cursed him also, amid the chokings of his agony; the wretch did his utmost to be a Jew to the end. Jesus, maintaining with calm and sublime dignity his great character as prophet and God Saviour, sealed in silence with his blood the exalted doctrines of the new law. No complaint, no reproach escaped him amid the infamous punishment which he underwent in the sight of a whole city: he looked down with mercy upon this people so far gone astray; and, wishing to appease the divine justice in favour of those who crucified him, "*Father*," he said with his dying voice, "*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*"

"And yet for eighteen centuries the Father has not forgiven them, and they drag their punishment with them all over the

earth, and all over the earth the slave is obliged to stoop down to look them in the face."[1]

The Virgin had left the temporary asylum where she had taken refuge, and walked with her head cast down towards the place of execution. At a little distance from the tree of infamy, rough soldiers were casting lots for the seamless robe which she had wrought with her hands,[2] and were making a noisy partition of those sacred garments which had wrought so many miracles.[3] A slight shudder passed over the features of Mary; she thought of the time when, rich in nothing but the love of Jesus, but free from immediate cares, she used to work in the evenings at the texture of this holiday tunic, and this thought gave her a desolating sorrow, for the lightning flash which showed her in the past the sight of her days of happiness did but deepen the darkness of her misery. She lifted up her eyes to heaven, to seek thence, as she ever did, strength to suffer, and her look met that of the crucified God. At that dreadful spectacle her languid feet were fast fixed to the ground, and she remained petrified with so great horror, with so frightful a shock, that what she had felt up to that time appeared to her no more than a sorrowful dream —a frightful, but almost effaced vision; all was absorbed in the cross.[4]

Jesus, casting on the Blessed Virgin a sweet and mysterious look, seemed to say to her, as on the previous evening to his apostles, "Mother, the hour is come!"

But what hour?

(1) M. l'Abbé de la Mennais.

(2) It is an ancient tradition that the Blessed Virgin had herself woven the tunic of her Son.

(3) The cathedral of Trêves possesses one of these sacred garments, and on its being exhibited in the year 1845, the returns of the police certified the presence in the city of twenty-five thousand pilgrims.

(4) The fathers and the doctors of the church place the sufferings of the Blessed Virgin on Calvary above those of all the martyrs. "Virgo universos martyres tantum excedit quantum sol ad reliqua astra," says St. Basil; and St. Anselm adds, "Quidquid crudelitatis inflictum est corporibus martyrum, leve fuit aut potius nihil comparatione tuæ passionis."—(De Ex. Virg., c. 5.)

The hour most memorable and fruitful in extraordinary events, of which the sun's shadow had marked the passage since man had parcelled out the duration of time to keep account of its passage; the hour when the Son of God was about to triumph over the world, over death and hell, and even the divine justice itself; the hour of the accomplishment of the oracles, the abolition of the sacrifices, the reinstatement of woman, the freedom of the slave, and our eternal redemption. And the Virgin thought she saw passing before her eyes the patriarchs, the righteous kings, the prophets inspired of God, who bowed down before CHRIST, like the sheaves of the sons of Jacob before the mysterious sheaf of Joseph. And she thought she saw Moses and Aaron laying at the foot of the new tree of life the ark of the covenant, the ephod, the rational, the plate of gold, and the almond rod, the symbol of the Hebrew priesthood, the mission of which was about to terminate; then David, placing there his prophetic harp by the side of the sword of Phinees, the sacred knife of Abraham, and the brazen serpent. The priests and the victims, the rites and ordinances, the types and symbols, gathered about the cross, there awaited their consummation; and the book with the seven seals of brass was laid open at the feet of the Great High Priest according to the Order of Melchisedech, who took place of the Aaronites. The old world, receding like the waves, which slowly recoil upon themselves, gave place to other images. Mary then thought she saw all the nations of the earth waiting at the foot of the cross, there to receive the gospel. Ethiopia and the islands stretched out their hands towards the Messias; the desert, which began to rejoice, *flourished like the rose;* the knowledge of God filled the earth, as the great waters cover the sandy bed of the oceans; and a thousand voices seemed to repeat in a thousand barbarous idioms, "Christ has overcome, blessed be his name!"

The noble and generous woman forgot for a short time the poignant sufferings which tortured her, and united herself in sympathy with the triumph of the law of grace, and the great social regeneration; but the vision of glory was not long before it

vanished, and sorrow re-entered at every pore; like Rachel, Mary wept over her firstborn, and would not be comforted!

Meanwhile, all nature seemed to participate in the suffering of her God; the daylight gradually became obscured, and the decreasing light gave a mournful tint to that vast and sterile region, so well suited for the crime of which it was the theatre. Every moment the darkness thickened; the dew fell by the sudden interruption of the heat; the eagles shrieked as they resumed their nocturnal shelter; the jackals howled on the banks of the Cedron, and Calvary, in itself so melancholy, took the appearance of a huge catafalque of black marble. The people, strongly impressed by this unusual event, began to keep the silence of fear; and some few voices, insulated and disdainful, the voices of the Pharisees and chiefs of the synagogue, alone continued to utter maledictions against CHRIST.

The stars soon appeared through the dark crape which veiled the face of the firmament, like funeral torches burning round a coffin, and cast a fearful greenish light upon the theatre of the deicide, which gave the masses of spectators standing in groups on the sides of Gihon the air of an assembly of demons and spectres. They looked at each other and turned pale. In vain did the scribes and Pharisees—too far plunged in the waters of crime to attempt to regain the bank—strive to attribute this prodigy to natural causes; the more the absence of light was prolonged, the less did their reasons appear conclusive. The old men, shaking their grey heads, declared that they had never seen such an eclipse; and the learned men versed in the science of the Chaldeans maintained, on the other hand, that no eclipse was either foreseen or possible in the actual position of the moon.[1]

(1) Phlegon relates that in the 202nd Olympiad, corresponding with the year 33 of our era, there was the greatest eclipse of the sun ever seen, and that at the hour of noon the stars appeared in the heavens; but astronomy demonstrating that there was no eclipse in that year, obliges us to acknowledge that the cause of that darkness was wholly supernatural. "We observed," says St. Dionysius the Areopagite—who was at that time at Heliopolis—"that the moon came unexpectedly to interpose between the sun and the earth, although it was not

This eclipse, of three hours' duration, was one of the prodigies connected with the Messias, which were intended to mark the anger of Heaven when CHRIST should be put to death. The prophet Amos had said, " And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that the sun shall go down at mid-day, and I will make the earth dark in the day of light." This darkness extended to Egypt, where at that time was St. Dionysius the Areopagite, who was studying philosophy at Hermopolis. Struck with terror, the young Greek cried out, addressing himself to his preceptor Apollophanes, "*Either the world is coming to an end, or the God of nature suffers.*"[1]

Amidst the general consternation, Jesus was occupied with his faithful friends, who had rallied round his cross in the hour of his ignominy. Touched with the courage of John, and the profound sorrow which this young and ardent disciple did not attempt to conceal, he would leave him a pledge of his divine affection. He could not bequeath to him a part of his earthly goods, he who had not a stone whereon to lay his head, and who was about to owe to the charity of a disciple even the loan of a tomb; he had nothing left in the world but his mother!—his mother, who had never left him, and who was dying at his death. He solemnly bequeathed her to his favourite disciple, as a pledge of those heavenly goods which he reserved for him in the kingdom of his Father. Knowing how much he was loved by these two holy souls, he foresaw, with his adorable goodness, the dreadful isolation in which his death was about to leave them, and would strengthen these two plants, devoid of support, by intertwining their separated branches.

By this arrangement, which added a new and cherished interest to her life, the Virgin must have understood that it was not granted her to follow her Son to the tomb, and that she had not arrived at the termination of her pilgrimage on earth. She resigned herself to the divine decrees out of love for us, whom

the time for such a conjunction in the natural order of those laws to which the heavenly bodies are subject, &c."—(Seventh Epistle to Polycarp.)

(1) St. Dionysius, Seventh Epistle to Polycarp.

she adopted in the person of the holy apostle. The sacrifice of Mary almost equalled then, humanly speaking, that of Jesus Christ. He willingly consented to die; and she to live! . . . . They were two mighty hearts, inflamed with love for men, and which alone fully understood each other; for their thoughts were not our thoughts, and the gold of their virtues was without alloy.

The manner in which Jesus bequeathed Mary to the young fisherman of Bethsaida was dignified and simple, like every act of his mortal life: "Woman, behold thy son;" and to the beloved disciple, "Behold thy mother."

If he did not use a more tender name when speaking to his mother, it was because he knew the power of the name which he thought proper to omit, and because he would not reopen wounds already so painful and profound.

"Afterwards, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scriptures might be fulfilled, said, *I thirst.*

"Now there was a vessel set there full of vinegar. And they put a sponge full of vinegar about hyssop, and put it to his mouth."

Infamous wretches to the very end!

Jesus having taken the vinegar, said, "It is *consummated.*" Then, willing to prove to the world that he died, not by the power of death, but by a formal act of his will, he uttered a loud cry, bowed down his head, and expired! . . . .

At that moment the idols of paganism shook upon their pedestals; the star of Moses, which had shone from only one point of the globe, and was to shine only for a time, descended to the horizon of the valleys, and the sun of the gospel, destined to give light to the world from one pole to the other, and to endure as long as the world, arose brilliantly from the side of the aurora. But God owed prodigies to the despised dignity of his Son, and they were not delayed. To the supernatural darkness, which began to clear away, succeeded the horrible convulsions of an earthquake, which overthrew twenty cities in Asia.[1] At the

(1) Pliny and Strabo speak of this earthquake. "It was so violent," say both these authors, "that it was felt even as far as Italy."

same time, the veil of the temple was rent, the rocks were split, and many bodies of the saints, which were in the sleep of death, arose and came into Jerusalem, where they caused fresh alarm among the people, already filled with consternation.

Then it was that a wonderful reaction was effected in favour of Jesus: the centurion and his soldiers, who had presided at the execution, cried out with one voice that the prophet of Nazareth was certainly more than man; and that immense multitude of people, who had overwhelmed Christ in his agonies with insults, shouts, and mockery, returned down the mountain striking their breasts, and repeating with terror, "INDEED THIS WAS THE SON OF GOD!"

In the midst of the cries of distress of the people, who fled without knowing which way to direct their steps, and while Golgotha was rending her rocky sides, there was seen, by the pale light which gleamed on this scene of horror, a woman standing and completely unmoved in the midst of the convulsions and ruins of nature. This woman seemed inaccessible to the general alarm; with her hands joined in the attitude of prayer, she was absorbed in the sorrowful contemplation of the crucified prophet.

And the daughters of Jerusalem began again to shed tears, saying with compassion, "Poor mother!"

Towards evening, the Pharisees, unwilling that the bodies should remain on the cross, lest the sanctity of the Sabbath, which would begin at nightfall, should be violated, went to request of Pilate permission to take them away. This permission being obtained, they set up ladders against the gibbets, where the two crucified thieves were still in agonies, and after rudely unfastening their feet and hands, they finished them by breaking their arms and legs. As to Jesus, as he was quite dead,[1] a soldier contented

(1) According to the Mussulmans, Jesus Christ is not dead. "The Jews did not put Jesus Christ to death," says Mahomet; "a phantom body deceived their barbarity; they did not crucify him; God assumed him to himself." (Koran, c. 4.) The Mussulman tradition says, that when the judgment trumpet shall sound, Aïsa (Jesus Christ) will descend from heaven to the earth, and will announce to all its inhabitants the great day of the last judgment; then he will

himself with piercing his side with a lance, and the divine blood which was to wash away the crimes of the world ran down in great drops upon the earth. At some distance, two women covered with veils, one of whom leaned upon the other in an attitude which betrayed the most heartrending grief, timidly beheld the proceedings of the Roman soldiers: they were Mary and Magdalen, for Magdalen too was there; and in the distance were perceived the other women from Galilee, who had left all to devote themselves to Jesus, and who had not forsaken him in the hour of punishment and ignominy. "Honour to them!" says Abeilard, "for when the disciples and apostles fled like cowards to the mountains, these weak but courageous creatures accompanied Christ even to the foot of the cross, and did not leave him till he was laid in the sepulchre!"

Then Joseph of Arimathea came up, a rich senator, who had obtained of Pontius Pilate the body of Jesus, of whom he was a disciple in secret, to pay him the honours of sepulture. He took him down from the cross, and prepared to wrap him up in a winding-sheet of fine linen from Egypt, which he had purchased at Jerusalem, when he beheld at his feet a woman pale as death, who stretched out her arms with the most affecting and sublime sorrow, to receive the crucified God. This woman, whose whole body trembled and was convulsed with shudderings of agony, had no voice left to articulate the request which seemed to move upon her lips, but there was not, upon her face bathed in tears, a muscle which did not petition. The senator, who recognised Mary, made a sign of sympathetic compassion, and laid upon her trembling knees the divine burden with which he had respectfully laden his shoulders. Then the Blessed Virgin could give

die, and be buried at the side of Mahomet; when the dead shall come forth from their graves, both shall arise together, and ascend into heaven. Burckhardt, who visited the great mosque of Medina, where are the tombs of Mahomet, Aboubekir, and Omar, three tombs of black stone, covered with precious stuffs and surrounded with magnificent *ex voto's*, says that a vacant place has been left by the side of Mahomet's tomb for the reception of Jesus after his death. Above this place and the tomb of Mahomet, was hung a magnificent brocade cloth enriched with diamonds, which was stolen by Sioud when he took Medina.

herself up to the bitter joy of pressing to her suffering and bleeding heart the disfigured body of her Son, and of applying her colourless lips to the wounds which had been made by the nails of the cross. Magdalen, on her knees, bathed with her warm tears the bleeding feet of her Lord, and moaned like a wounded dove. In the background of this picture of desolation were the women of Galilee, weeping.[1] During this time, some of Joseph's servants prepared the perfumes on the stone *of unction*,[2] and others opened the sepulchre hewn out of the rock, which was to receive the mortal remains of the Son of God.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DEATH OF MARY.

Tranquillity began to return, and the signs of the wrath of heaven had ceased to alarm the Jews, who had just shed the blood of our Saviour. Like all wild animals, the executioners of Christ had for a moment lost their savage instincts in the hour of peril. Terrified at first at what they had done, they had feared that the tottering rocks of Calvary would crush them in their fall, and that the earth would make them go down alive into the dark depths of *scheol;* but this remorse disappeared with their terrors, and they gradually returned to their spiteful and malicious nature, as they saw the heavens become again serene.

Unable to deny the prodigies which an immense number of

(1) There are some authors who hold that these holy women picked up some of the earth quite saturated with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, and that it was by this means that some of it has been in the possession of certain churches in France, as St. Denis, and the Sainte-Chapelle, of Paris.

(2) The stone of the anointing is at present in the chapel of Calvary; it has been necessary, for its preservation, to cover it with white marble and surround it with an iron balustrade.

people had seen with their eyes, and which were attested by the rent sides of the mountains, the tombs scarcely covered over again, and the veil of the temple in tatters, they attributed them to magic, and maintained that this Jesus, so powerful in word and work, was only a son of Belial, who had fascinated the people, and commanded the elements by means of the ineffable name of the God of Israel, which he had stolen by surprise from the Holy of Holies.[1] And the people suffered themselves to be led away by this ridiculous falsehood which their leaders cast before them; for there is no calumnious absurdity which does not find credulous ears to welcome it, and nimble tongues to spread it abroad. Meantime a vigilant guard, chosen from the satellites of the high priest, watched in arms around the tomb; for Jesus had announced that he would rise again on the third day, and the princes of the synagogue pretended to fear that his disciples would take him away during the night.

The third day began to appear, and the east was scarcely tinged with colour, when several women from Galilee, bringing perfumes and aromatic plants, to embalm Jesus after the manner of the kings of Juda,[2] appeared upon the mountain of punishment, pensively making their way towards the garden where the tomb of Christ was. According to tradition, Mary was with these holy women.* Her dejected countenance resembled a marble laid prostrate by the stormy wind of adversity; but her look did not express merely sorrow—it depicted expectation. The deicidal city was slumbering, enveloped in the transparent vapours of the morning; the flowers had half opened their cups laden with dew, the birds were singing in the humid branches of the wild fig-trees, and one would have said that the sun scattered rubies

(1) See Basn., liv. vi. pp. 27 and 28.

(2) It is clear that they were going to embalm Jesus in a new way; for Nicodemus had already wrapped it up in bandages of myrrh.

* This is the only passage of the author on which the TRANSLATOR feels called upon to insert a note. It is contrary to all probability, as well as to the general opinion of spiritual writers, to suppose that the Blessed Mother, who so well knew the approaching resurrection of her divine Son, would have accompanied, and so far encouraged, those who came to embalm him, without hope.



A. Carracci. W. Ridgway.

THE THREE MARYS.

over the blue vault of the firmament; nature seemed to have put on again, with unusual joy, her brilliant robe of light, and that scenery so grand, and yet so dark and sad, which surrounded Jerusalem, assumed a sweet and cheerful expression which it had never had till then, and which seemed to announce a glorious mystery which it would keep secret.

On a sudden, in the midst of this smiling scene, a shock is felt; the stone which closes the sepulchre rolls over as if moved by some mighty arm; the guards fall down half dead on their faces on the ground; and the women, who did not desert Jesus upon the cross, turn pale themselves, and fall back, fearful of seeing those frightful prodigies renewed, which accompanied the death of the Son of Man.

But an angel, whose garments equalled in whiteness the mountain snow, and whose gracious countenance shone like lightning, seats himself upon the stone of the sepulchre, and encourages the servants of Jesus Christ. "Fear not you," says a sweet voice, "for I know that you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified; he is not here, for he is risen as he said. Come and see the place where the Lord was laid." While the pious Galilean women entered with fear into the tomb, and were astonished at the sight of the winding-sheet and bands perfumed with myrrh, which were left at the entrance, the virgin, whose face shone with accumulated joy, was leaning against an aged olive-tree at some distance. A young man, dressed in the ordinary costume of the people, was conversing with her in a low voice. This young man was the "first born from among the dead," the glorious conqueror of hell, Jesus Christ.[1] No one ever knew what passed at this solemn interview; but we may believe that Mary,

(1) St. Ambrose, who lived in the fourth century, says that the Virgin was the first who had the happiness to see Jesus risen; and the poet Sedulius, who flourished shortly after St. Ambrose, records this tradition in his verses. They both speak of it as of generally received belief among Christians. The Arab historians have preserved this tradition: Ismaël, the son of Ali, relates that Jesus descended from heaven to console Mary his mother, who wept for him. An altar has been erected on the spot where this affecting interview took place.

whose valiant soul had undergone the greatest possible paroxysm of grief, experienced at that time a degree of joy which we could not feel without dying.

Our Lord, during the forty days which followed his resurrection, frequently appeared to the apostles, and conversed with them of the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the regeneration which would be wrought in men by baptism. Pious authors have supposed that the Virgin was the most favoured in these consoling apparitions, and that in them she experienced a foretaste of the happiness of the elect. The bitter waters of her affliction were changed into fountains of grace, and our Saviour "fed her with the hidden manna which he reserves for those who keep patience according to his word."

At length the hour arrived when the divine decrees recalled Christ to heaven; his mission of redemption was fulfilled, and the apostles, whom his resurrection had fully convinced of his divinity, had received from him the necessary instructions for converting the nations to his admirable gospel.

In the middle of the fortieth day, he went out of Jerusalem with them, and proceeded towards the heights of Bethania. This direction was not taken accidentally: there was that mountain crowned with olive-trees, where our Saviour, withdrawing from the crowd, had often prayed to his Father at the hour when the silent moon shone with its opal light upon the leaden waters of the Dead Sea, the green valley of the Jordan, and the giant palm-trees of the plain of Jericho,—distant sites, which seemed to display themselves at her feet. There also was that celebrated garden where Jesus had painfully experienced the first attacks of agony. It was just that his glory should commence in the same places where his generous sufferings had begun, and that those fields, those woods, those shady solitudes, which had so often been witnesses of his meditations and his prayers, should receive the impress of the last steps he took before he reascended to heaven.

Arrived at the summit of that high mountain, whence he could discern a great part of Judea, and salute with a farewell sign the

spots which he had made celebrated by his miracles and his death, our Saviour stopped in an open space, at a short distance from a wood of olive-trees, which spread out their pale foliage to the burning noonday sun. There, after lifting up his hands, still pierced by the nails of the cross, to his heavenly Father, as if to recommend to him his infant Church, he lowered them upon his mother and his disciples, as Jacob had done to the sons of Joseph; then he arose by his own power, and ascended slowly to heaven. This last act of our Saviour put a worthy seal upon his divine mission. During his life, "he went about doing good;" upon Calvary he prayed for his executioners, and he ascended into heaven blessing the humble friends whom he was leaving behind him upon earth. While he had his hands still stretched out over his prostrate disciples, they saw him enter a white cloud, which took him out of their sight.

The Ascension of our Lord had not that dark and terrifying character which chilled the people with fear in the days of old. The law of Moses had been proclaimed with the sound of trumpets, the noise of thunder, and ominous flashes of lightning; Elias had been carried up to heaven in a fiery chariot; but the Saviour of the world was gently borne upon a light cloud, with that serene and calm majesty which becomes the genius of the gospel and the touching character of its Author.

The angels, those benevolent spirits who rejoice in the happiness of men, figured also in that scene which unravelled the grand drama of the Redemption. Their divine canticles had announced to the shepherds the birth of the kingly Messias; their voice had proclaimed his resurrection from the dead; it was fitting that their words should come to confirm his glorious ascension.

As the disciples were steadfastly looking at Jesus ascending into heaven, two men, clothed in white, suddenly appeared, and said to them, " Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven? This Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come as you have seen him going into heaven."

The apostles and disciples cast down their eyes, dazzled at

the voice of the angels; but did the Virgin cast down hers? Was it denied to her to see her divine Son majestically take his place at the right hand of Jehovah in the inaccessible light of the saints? Was she really less favoured than St. Stephen and the beloved disciple? That is hardly to be presumed. She who had been morally crucified with Jesus upon Calvary deserved to be glorified with him; it was her right: she had dearly paid for it! Yes, Mary was entitled to look with her mortal eyes into that peaceful and blessed region, the entrance of which Jesus had just opened for us by his blood, and where he himself wipes away the tears of the just;[1] then the pearl gates of the heavenly Jerusalem[2] slowly closed upon the victorious God, and the Virgin, separated for a short time from Him whom she loved, found herself alone upon the earth, like a climbing plant uprooted.

Ten days afterwards, we find her again in prayer in the upper room, where she received the Holy Ghost with the apostles.

Mary was the pillar of light which guided the first steps of the infant Church. To her the apostles attributed the numerous ears of corn which they plucked from the rebellious field of the synagogue, to lay them up in the granaries of the Householder. She accepted this tribute in the name of her Son with graceful humility, and she was seen constantly surrounded by the poor, the afflicted, and sinners; for she always loved with a love of predilection those to whom she could do good. The evangelists came to her to seek light; the apostles, unction, courage, constancy; and the afflicted spiritual consolations; all left her with benedictions: *the Sun of Justice* had set on the blood-stained horizon of Golgotha; but *the Star of the Sea* still reflected its softest rays on the renovated world, and poured benign influence upon the cradle of Christianity.

The Virgin remained at Jerusalem till the terrible persecution, which broke out against the Christians in the year 44 of our Lord, obliged her to depart from it with the apostles. Her adopted

(1) Apocal., cap. xxi. v. 4.
(2) Ibid. v. 21.

son then took her to Ephesus, whither Magdalen would follow her.

Nothing has come down to us of the abode of Mary at Ephesus; but this void is easily explained by the incessant occupations of that period. After the resurrection of our Saviour, the apostles, occupied exclusively with the propagation of the faith, considered as secondary matter all that was not directly and prominently connected with that absorbing subject. Full of their high mission, entirely devoted to the salvation of souls, they so completely forgot themselves as to have hardly left us a small number of incomplete documents on the evangelical labours which changed the face of the globe; so that their history is more like some epitaph, sublime, but almost effaced, which has neither beginning nor end. That the Mother of Jesus shared the lot of the apostles is readily conceived; the latter years of her life were spent far away from Jerusalem, in a foreign country, where her abode was not marked by any striking fact, offering only a blank surface, which has left no lasting impression on the fugitive memory of men. Nevertheless, the flourishing state of the Church of Ephesus, its tender devotion to Mary, and the praises which St. Paul gives to its piety, sufficiently indicate the fruitful care of the Virgin, and the divine benedictions which followed her wherever she was. The Rose of Jesse left some little of its perfume in the air, and this vestige, slight as it was, is a precious revelation of its passage.

The coasts of Asia Minor, studded with opulent cities, rich in wonderful vegetation, and bathed by a sea ploughed in every sense by a multitude of vessels, would have appeared to ordinary exiles a splendid compensation for the lofty and barren mountains of Palestine. It is doubtful if the Virgin of Nazareth judged thus: the footsteps of the Man-God had not sanctified this enchanted ground, and the tombs of her forefathers were not there! . . . . . How often, seated beneath a plane-tree, on the shore of that beautiful Icarian Sea, the waves of which expire at the feet of myrtles upon a narrow belt of sand, did Mary and Magdalen call up recollections of their native country, as they followed with

their eyes some Greek galley whose prow was turned towards Syria! The spotless snows of Libanus, the blue tops of Carmel, the waters of the Lake of Tiberias, then revived in their conversations; the sites of the absent country, embellished by distance, passed by turns before them, and seemed to them a thousand times preferable to that soft and smiling Ionia, which was in fact to the land of Jehovah what the lyre of Anacreon is to the harp of David.

It was during her abode at Ephesus, that the Virgin lost the faithful companion who, in imitation of Ruth, had left her country and her people to follow her beyond the seas: Magdalen died, and Mary wept for her, as Jesus had wept for Lazarus.[1]

Of all her ties of affection and relationship, there remained to the Virgin none but St. John, the good and amiable disciple to whom her dying Son had bequeathed her; she followed him, as it is believed, in his journeys; and it was, no doubt, in his conversations with the Queen of prophets that St. John completed the wonderful knowledge which he displays in his gospel. Assisted by the lights of Her whom the Fathers have compared to the golden candlestick with seven branches, the young fisherman of Bethsaida penetrated farther than any one into the incomprehensible mystery of the increated essence of the Word, and his thought soared up with a flight so bold into the mystic heights of heaven, that in comparison with him the other evangelists seem only to graze the earth.[2]

(1) We read, in some Greek authors of the seventh and following centuries, that after the ascension of Jesus Christ, St. Mary Magdalen accompanied the Virgin and St. John to Ephesus; that she died in that city, and was buried there. This also is the opinion of Modestus, Patriarch of Jerusalem, who flourished in 920; of St. Gregory of Tours, and St. Gnillebaud. This last, in the account of his journey to Jerusalem, says that he saw at Ephesus the tomb of St. Magdalen. The Emperor Leo, the philosopher, had the saint's relics translated from Ephesus to Constantinople, and deposited them in the Church of St. Lazarus, about the year 890. Another tradition, supported by esteemed men of learning, would have it that St. Mary Magdalen ended her days in Provence; we have adopted the contrary opinion, because it appeared to us the more probable, without, however, deciding the question.

(2) The Abbot Rupert (in Cant.) assures us that the Blessed Virgin supplied,

Meanwhile the sowers of Christ had scattered the good seed of the sacred word over all points of the Roman world; the gospel harvest was green, and the workmen of the Householder laboured earnestly in the holy field. Mary judged that her mission upon earth was accomplished, and that the Church could henceforth support itself by its own strength. Then, like a wearied labourer in the harvest, who seeks shade and repose in the middle of the day, she began to sigh for the fair shade of the tree of life, which grows near the throne of the Lord, and for the living and sanctifying streams which water it.[1] He who sounds the depths of the soul met this desire in the heart of his Mother, and the angel who stands at his right hand came to announce to the future Queen of heaven that her Son had graciously heard her.[2]

At this divine revelation, which was accompanied, according to Nicephorus, with that of the day and hour of her decease, the daughter of Abraham felt the love of her absent country powerfully revive in her heart; she wished to behold again the lofty mountains of Judea,—where the recollections of redemption were still lively,—and to die in sight of Calvary, where Jesus had died. St. John, to whom her slightest desires had ever been commands, immediately prepared to depart and return to Palestine.

The Hebrew travellers probably embarked at Miletus, the famous port of which was the resort of the galleys of Europe and Asia, which navigated those seas. During their voyage on the Grecian seas, the Virgin and the Evangelist recognised, as they passed, the island of Chios, the people of which, who long possessed the empire of the sea, were the first to introduce the odious custom of purchasing slaves, a custom which the gospel was gradually to abolish; then Lesbos, the country of the lyric

by the light she possessed, what the Holy Spirit, who was given by measure to the disciples, had not been pleased to reveal to them; and the holy Fathers all agree that it was from the Blessed Virgin that St. Luke received divers marvellous and particular circumstances of the infancy of Jesus Christ.

(1) Apocal., c. xxii. v. 1, 2.

(2) Tradition relates that the Blessed Virgin received the announcement of her approaching death by the ministry of an angel, who informed her of the day and hour.—(Descout., p. 235; F. Croiset, t. xviii. p. 158.)

poets, where the hymn to the Virgin most pure was to succeed the burning odes of Sappho, and the more manly songs of Alceus. On seeing the top of the temple of Esculapius rounding in the clouds, which attracted an immense concourse of strangers to the island of Cos, the Mother of the Saviour of men was reminded of her divine Son, who, during his sojourning upon earth, had employed his divine power in curing the sick on the spot, and raising the dead to life.[1] Delos, the cradle of Apollo, Rhodes, the birthplace of Jupiter, arose in turn from the midst of the waters, with their verdant mountains and their antique temples, quite peopled with gods, soon to be banished to the infernal regions by the God crucified on Golgotha. At some distance from Cyprus, a black peak was distinguishable in the clouds, traced upon the velvet blue of heaven; it was the mountain where the prophet Elias had erected, in ancient days, an altar to the future Mother of our Saviour, and where his disciples were on the point of placing themselves under her helping protection. The next day, the galley entered with oars a port of Syria, perhaps Sidon, which had frequent commercial intercourse with Palestine, as the sacred books inform us.

They returned into Israel, after an absence of several years. Mary retired to Mount Sion, at a short distance from the ruined and deserted palace of the ancient princes of her race, and into the house which had been sanctified by the descent of the Holy Ghost. St. John on his part went in search of St. James, who was related to the Blessed Virgin, and Bishop of Jerusalem, to inform him, as well as the faithful who composed his already numerous Church, that the Mother of Jesus was come among them to die.

The day and the hour were come: the saints of Jerusalem beheld again the daughter of David, still poor, still humble, still beautiful; for one would have said that this admirable and holy

(1) The followers of Mahomet have preserved the memory of the miracles of Jesus Christ. They maintain that the breath of our Lord, which they call "bad Messih" (the breath of the Messias), not only raised the dead, but could even give life to inanimate things.—(D'Herb., Bibl. Or., t. i. p. 365.)

creature escaped the destructive agency of time, and that, predestined from her birth to a complete and glorious immortality, nothing in her was to decay.[1] Serious, but not ill, she received the apostles and disciples, seated on a small bed of poor appearance, suitable to her costume as a woman of the common sort of people, which she had never discontinued. There was something so solemn and affecting in her air, full of dignity and grandeur, that the whole assembly melted into tears. Mary alone remained calm in that ample and lofty chamber, where a crowd of old disciples and new Christians flocked in, alike eager to hear her and contemplate her.

The night had come on, and lamps with many branches seemed to cast, with their white light, something mysterious and solemn upon this sad and silent assembly. The apostles, deeply moved, stood round about the funeral couch. St. Peter, who had so loved the Son of God during his life, contemplated the Virgin with a feeling of sorrow, and his speaking look seemed to say to the Bishop of Jerusalem, "How much she is like Jesus Christ!" Indeed the likeness was striking;[2] and the stooping posture of Mary, which brought to mind that of our Saviour during the Last Supper, completed it. St. James, who had received from the Jews themselves the surname of "Just," and who knew how to control his emotions, suppressed his tears; the prince of the apostles, a man of openness and first impulse, was deeply affected, and showed it; St. John had hid his head in one of the folds of his Grecian mantle, but his sobs betrayed him. There was not the whole assembly a heart which was not broken, or an eye which was not moist. Mary, sharing in the general emotion, and forgetting the splendours which awaited her on high, in order to wipe away the tears which were shed on earth, began to speak, with a view to strengthen the faith of her children, to revive

(1) St. Denis, an eye-witness of the death of the Blessed Virgin, affirms that at that advanced period of her life she was still wonderfully beautiful.

(2) Jesus Christ stooped a little, and this made him appear something shorter; his countenance was very much like that of his mother, particularly in the lower part of it.—(Nic., Hist. Eccl., t. i. p. 126.)

their sacred hopes and inflame their charity; she spoke to them, with unrivalled eloquence, those strong and sublime things which we listen to breathless, which exalt man above himself, and enable him to undertake everything. Her speech, so sweet that the Scripture has poetically compared it to a honeycomb, became gradually powerful; the daughter of David and Solomon, the inspired prophetess who had pronounced, without premeditation, the triumphant hymn of the "Magnificat," rose to considerations so sublime, that every one forgot, in his delight, that death was at the end of this song of the swan. But the fatal hour drew near. Mary stretched out her protecting hands over the poor orphans whom she was about to leave, and raising up her fine countenance to the stars which shone outside with serene majesty, she beheld the heavens opened, and the Son of Man stretching out his arms to her from the bosom of a bright cloud.[1] At this prospect, a rosy tint diffused itself over her countenance, her eyes expressed all that maternal love mingled with divine joy carried to its completion, and adoration arrived at the state of ecstacy can express, and her soul, leaving without the least effort her fair and virginal mortal envelope, softly sunk into the bosom of God.[2]

Mary was no more,—but her face, which had taken the ex-

(1) St. John Damascen.

(2) Some of the ancient fathers, and among others St. Epiphanius, seem to doubt whether the Mother of God really died, or whether she has remained immortal, having been taken up body and soul into heaven; but the sentiment of the Church is that she really died according to the condition of the body, and the Church plainly declares this in the prayer of the mass on the day of the Assumption.—The Blessed Virgin died in the night before the 15th of August. The year of her death is very uncertain. Eusebius fixes it in the year 48 of our era; thus, according to him, Mary would have lived sixty-eight years; but Nicephorus (lib. xi. c. 21) formally says that she ended her days in the year 5 of the reign of Claudius, that is, in the year 798 of Rome, or 45 of the common era. Then, supposing that the Blessed Virgin was sixteen years old when our Saviour came into the world, she would have lived sixty-one years. Hippolytus of Thebes assures us in his chronicle that the Blessed Virgin gave birth to our Saviour at the age of sixteen, and died eleven years after Jesus Christ. According to the authors of the Art de verifier les Dates, the Virgin died at the age of sixty-six.

pression of a tranquil sleep, was so sweet to behold, that one would have said that death hesitated to plant his banner on that trophy, which he was to hold but for one day.

The lamp of the dead was lighted; all the windows were opened, and the summer breezes made their way into the apartment with the pale rays of the stars. It is said that a miraculous light filled the mortuary chamber at the moment when Mary had just drawn her last breath; it was perhaps the glory of God surrounding the spotless soul of the predestined Virgin. When the death of Mary was no longer doubtful, nothing was heard at first but weeping and deep groaning; then, funereal canticles arose amid the silence of night; the angels accompanied them on their golden harps,[1] and the echoes of the mouldering palace of David sorrowfully repeated them to the tombs of the kings of Juda.

The next day the faithful brought, with holy profusion, the most precious perfumes and the finest stuffs for the burial of the Queen of Virgins. She was embalmed, according to the custom of her people, but her blessed remains exhaled an odour sweeter than the perfumed bandages in which they enveloped her. The funeral preparations being finished, they placed the Mother of God upon a portable litter full of aromatic ingredients:[2] they covered her with a sumptuous veil, and the apostles bore her upon their shoulders into the valley of Josaphat.[3] The Christians of Jerusalem, carrying lighted torches, and singing hymns and

(1) "All the heavenly host," says St. Jerom, "came to meet the Mother of God with praises and canticles, and surrounded her with a light of intense brilliancy, and conducted her to the throne. 'Militiam cœlorum, cum suis agminibus, festive obviam venisse Genitrici Dei cum laudibus et canticis, eamque ingenti lumine circumfulsisse et usque ad tronum perduxisse.'"

(2) The coffins among the Jews, in the time of Mary, were a sort of litter, made so that the body could be easily carried; this litter was filled with aromatical herbs. Josephus, describing the interment of Herod the Great, says that his litter was ornamented with precious stones, that his body reposed upon purple, that he had the diadem on his head, and that all his household followed his litter.

(3) Metaphrastes affirms that the apostles bore the Virgin to the tomb on their shoulders.

psalms, followed the funeral of Mary with sad and downcast looks.

Arrived at the place of sepulture, the mournful procession stopped. By the care of the holy women of Jerusalem, the tomb was deprived of its unpleasant aspect, and the sepulchral cave appeared only like a cradle of flowers.[1] There the apostles gently laid Mary, and as they laid her down, they wept. Of all the panegyrics pronounced on this circumstance, that of Hierothus was the most remarkable. St. Dionysius the Areopagite, who describes this scene as an eye-witness, relates that in praising the Virgin, the orator was almost out of himself.[2]

For three days the apostles and the faithful watched and prayed near the tomb, where sacred concerts of angels seemed to enchant the last sleep of Mary.[3]

An apostle, returned from a far distant country, and who had not been present at the death of the Virgin, arrived in the meantime: it was Thomas, he who had put his hand to the wounds of his Master risen from the dead. He hastened to take a last look, and to water with his tears the cold remains of the privileged woman who had borne in her chaste womb the sovereign Master of nature. Overcome by his entreaties and his tears, the apostles removed that piece of stone which closed the entrance of the sepulchre; but they found nothing but the flowers, scarcely faded, upon which the corpse of Mary had rested, and her white winding-sheet of fine linen from Egypt, which diffused a celestial odour. The most pure body of the immaculate

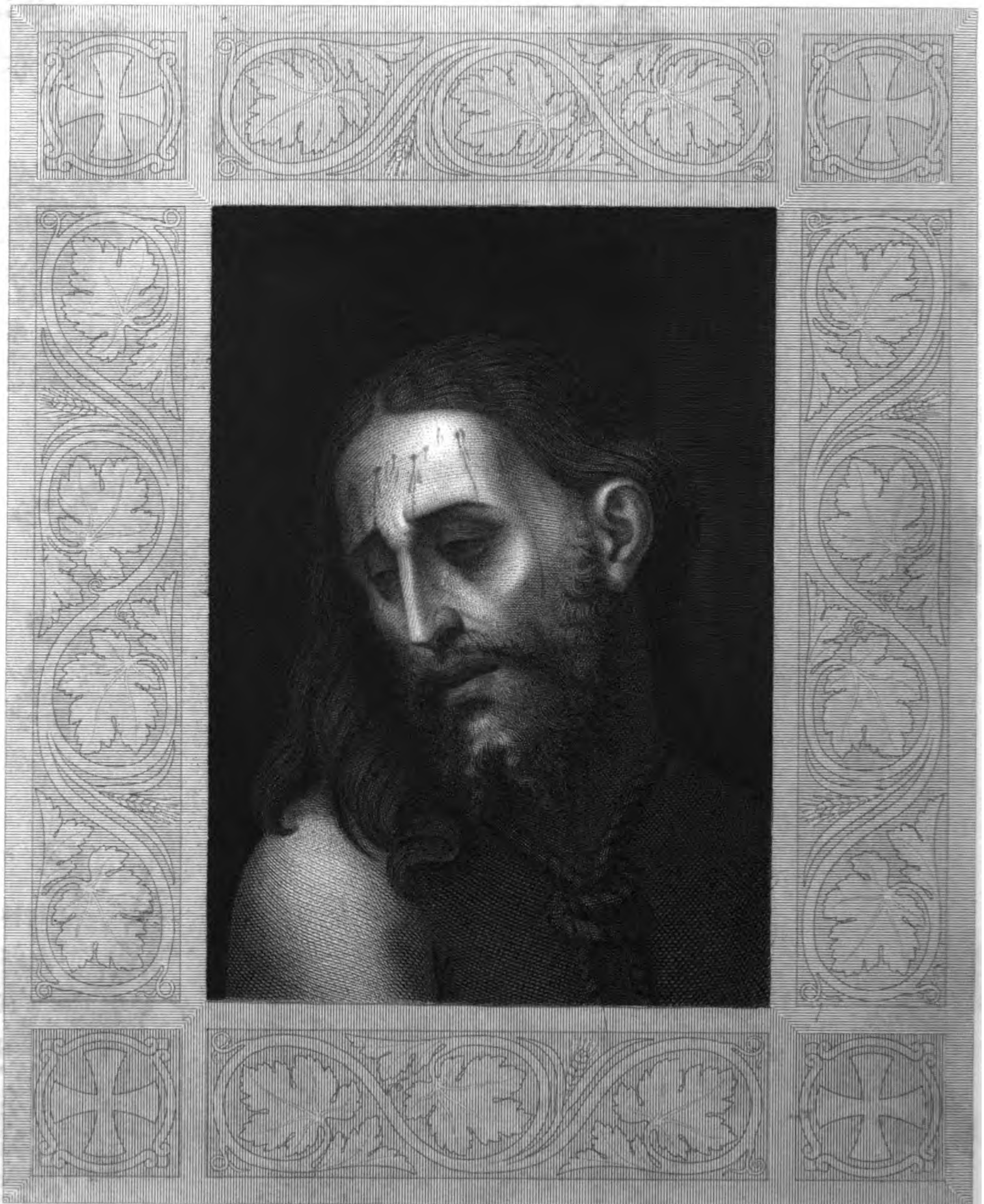
(1) Greg. Tur., lib. i. de Gl., c. 4.

(2) Books of the Divine Names, c. iii. These books of St. Dionysius, the Areopagite, have been rejected by Protestants; but they are no less authorised by an infinity of testimonies of the most ancient Fathers and Doctors of the Church, by the third ecumenical council of Constantinople, and also by others.

(3) Juvenal, Patriarch of Jerusalem, who lived in the fifth century, writing to the Emperor Marcian and the Empress Pulcheria, says that the apostles, relieving one another, spent the day and night with the faithful at the tomb, mingling their canticles with those of the angels, who, for three days, ceased not to make the most heavenly harmony heard by them.

Virgin was not the destined prey of the worms of the coffin: during her life, earth and heaven equally had part in that admirable creature; after her death, heaven had taken all, and glorified all.[1]

(1) A very judicious remark of Godescard comes in support of the Assumption: it is that "neither the Latins, nor even the Greeks, so greedy after novelties, and so easily persuaded in the matter of relics, histories, and legends—no people, in a word, no city, no church has ever boasted of possessing the mortal remains of the Blessed Virgin, nor any portion of her body. Thus, without prescribing the belief of the corporal assumption of Mary into heaven, the church sufficiently gives us to understand the opinion to which she inclines."—(Godescard, t. xiv. p. 449.)



Moralès pinx! L. Aristide sculp!

THE

HISTORY OF THE DEVOTION

TO

THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY,

Mother of God.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF THE ABBÉ ORSINI,

BY THE

VERY REV. F. C. HUSENBETH, D.D., V.G.,

PROVOST OF NORTHAMPTON.

THE

HISTORY OF THE DEVOTION

TO

THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY,

MOTHER OF GOD.

CHAPTER I.

ORIGIN AND ANTIQUITY OF THE RELIGIOUS VENERATION OF MARY.

THE religious veneration of saints, which evil disposed heretics impute to us as idolatry, and which a Protestant minister has not been afraid to call *the malady of the Christians of the fourth century*, is so far from having begun at that period, that it is of apostolical tradition and of Jewish origin. The Hebrews implored of the dead counsel and miraculous cures, when those dead had been prophets acknowledged by God. The prophets were their saints, and saints who read the future as in an open book, from the depths of the sepulchral cave, where they slept by the side of their fathers. Look at Saul with the witch of Endor; the ghost of Samuel, though evoked by incantations which the law of Moses condemns, appeared by permission of the Lord, to terrify the monarch rejected by Heaven. The prophet, wrapped in his mantle, rises slowly out of the earth with a majesty of evil import; the enchantress utters a cry of terror at the sight of this departed great one, whom she takes for a God. Saul, bowing down before the ghost of him who was so long the

supreme judge of Israel, interrogates him as to the issue of the battle in which he is about to engage with the Philistines; and the prophet answers him in a voice unaccompanied by any breath of life, for his body is at Ramatha, where all Israel has mourned for him: "To-morrow thou and thy sons shall be with me: and the Lord will also deliver the army of Israel into the hands of the Philistines."

The Jews, then, did believe that their saints had a knowledge of the future.

In the fourth Book of Kings we see that a dead man comes to life again by contact with the bones of Eliseus.

The saints of Israel, then, did work miracles.

We read in the second Book of Macchabees, that the high priest Onias and the prophet Jeremias were seen, after their death, praying for the people; and we find in the Gemare that Caleb was saved from the hands of those who sought after him, because he went to the tomb of his ancestors to beg of them to intercede for him, that he might escape.[1]

The Jews, therefore, did believe that the intercession of departed saints was of some utility.

From the time of their settlement in Palestine, the Israelites visited the tomb of Rachel, a primitive monument composed of twelve enormous stones, upon which every pilgrim inscribed his name; the tomb of Joseph, the saviour of Egypt, *whose bones prophesied*,[2] was in like manner a place of prayer.

At the time of the dispersion of the tribes, such crowds visited the sepulchral cave of Ezechiel, who was buried on the banks of the river Chobar, where he had had those divine visions, that the Chaldeans, fearing that these numerous assemblages might conceal, under the cloak of religion, some plot for political revolt, resolved to fall upon these pilgrims, and disperse them at the point of the sword. A massacre would inevitably have followed, if the *dead* prophet had not worked a miracle to save his

(1) Wagenseil, Excerpta ex Gem.
(2) Eccles., ch. xlix. v. 18.

people, by dividing the waters of the Chobar.[1] This sepulchre of a saint of Israel, which was surrounded by a superb edifice, and before which a golden lamp burnt day and night, which the leading men of the captivity were bound to keep up,[2] has become again a mere cavern; but this cavern is visited by all the Jews of Asia, who never pass by to Bagdad, without going out of their way to pray there.

At the foot of the Orontes, the beautiful shades of which waved above a thousand silvery streams, which reflect the brightness of the Asiatic sun, is a city once royal, once admired, which lies extended in the midst of ruined towers, temples overthrown, and sarcophagi of red granite, covered with inscriptions written in a dead and lost language: it is Ecbatana, the ancient capital of the Medes, now the obscure Hamadan. At one end of the decayed city rises a brick monument, the doorway of which, after the ancient sepulchral style of the country, is very small, and made of very thick stone: it is the tomb of a beautiful, young, and pious queen, who faced death to save her people,—of the noble Esther, —who was there deposited on an ivory couch, inlaid with gold, embalmed with musk and amber, and wrapped in a winding-sheet of silk from China,[3] by the side of the great Hebrew patriot Mardochai.[4] This illustrious tomb, which is regarded by the Jews of Persia as a place of particular sanctity, and whither they resort in crowds at the time of the feast of Purim,[5] is the term of a pilgrimage of two thousand years' duration.

(1) Benjamin de Tolede, Itineraire, pp. 70—80.

(2) Epiphan., de Vitis Prophetorum, t. ii. p. 241.

(3) "He built her a mausoleum after the manner of the Iranians (Iran was, before Cyrus, the real name of the vast kingdom now called Persia), filled her skull with musk and amber, wrapped up her body in Chinese silk, placed her on a throne of ivory, as kings are seated, and suspended her crown over her head; afterwards the door of the tomb was painted red and blue."—(Firdousi, Book of Kings, Kei Khosrou.)

(4) Travels of Sir Robert Ker Porter in Armenia and Persia.—The present tomb of Esther and Mordecai occupies the same place as the old one, which was destroyed by Tamerlane.

(5) This feast, which was instituted at Susan by Mordecai and Esther, was celebrated very solemnly on the 14th or 15th day of the month of Ader, which

In the middle ages, when the Saracens were in power, the Arabs having threatened the Jews with a general massacre, during a great drought which made Syria and Palestine barren, if rain should not fall by a certain day, they assembled in crowds around the tomb of Zacharias, which still remains in the environs of Jerusalem, and they fasted and prayed there in sackcloth and ashes for many days, to obtain of God, by the intercession of that prophet, that he would save them from certain death, by causing rain to fall upon the earth.

The custom of applying the merits of the dead to the living is of Hebrew origin; we find proof of it in a liturgy of the synagogue of Venice. In the office entitled Mazir Mehamot (*remembrance of souls*), we read a prayer conceived in these terms: "Graciously hear us, O Jehovah, for the sake of those who loved thee, and are no more; graciously hear us for the sake of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sara, Rachel, &c."

Therefore, the Invocation of Saints is not *a thing imagined by Catholics.*

Besides the saints, the Jews prayed to the angels, who were invoked by the ancient Arabs, and to whom the Assyrians, who attributed to them the functions of enchanters upon earth, offered sacrifices.[1] Jacob acknowledges that he is indebted to an angel for his deliverance from the evils which threatened him, and he prays to him to bless his children: *Angelus qui eripuit me de cunctis malis benedicat pueris istis:*[2]— this prayer is addressed to an angel. There is, indeed, some reason to believe that the Jews

is our moon of February. The Jews had formerly the custom of making a cross of wood, upon which they painted Aman, whom they dragged about the city, that every one might see him. They afterwards burnt it, and threw the ashes into the river. The Emperor Theodosius forbad them to act this comedy, lest it should be any allusion to the death of Jesus Christ.

(1) Among the Persians, every month was under the protection of an angel; to the angels was entrusted the care of seas, rivers, springs, pastures, flocks, trees, herbs, fruits, flowers, and seeds; they also directed the stars; they offered up prayers to the angels to obtain protection in any calamity. The modern Persians still sacrifice to the angel of the moon.—(Firdousi, Book of Kings; Chardin, Voyage en Perse.)

(2) Gen. xlviii. v. 16.

carried the veneration of angels too far, since they were suspected of adoring them.[1] This veneration did not cease among the modern Jews till the period of the so-called Reformation, when they abandoned it to please the innovators of Germany. There is, in the Vatican library, a Hebrew manuscript containing litanies composed by R. Eleazer Hakalir, in which the angel Actariel is thus addressed: "Deliver Israel from all affliction, and solicit his redemption speedily." The like favours are asked of Barachiel, of Wathiel, and of other angelic princes. The litany concludes with this address to Michael: "Prince of mercy, pray for Israel, that he may rule with exalted power."

The tombs of the martyrs were very early venerated by the Christians of Asia; the first to which pilgrimages were made was probably that of St. John Baptist, which is the most respected by the Orientals, without distinction of creed, after the Holy Sepulchre and the tomb of the Blessed Virgin. The body of the precursor of the God-Man was at Samaria, where St. Paula visited it in the fourth century; and his head, carefully embalmed by his disciples, was at Hems, whence it was translated to Damascus, in the reign of Theodosius. It was there deposited in a superb church, which bore the title of St. Zachary, but which from that time was called St. John's. The Caliph Abdelmeleck took possession of this church by force, and at the present day the venerated tomb of the man, who was *a prophet, and more than a prophet*, is enclosed within a Turkish mosque. But it is neither solitary nor unhonoured there; the Mussulmans come thither in pilgrimage from all parts, and the celebrated Saadi himself relates, in his Gulistan, that when he went to pray there, he met there princes of the Arabs. At the close of the first century, the faithful of Asia Minor repaired in crowds to the tomb of St. John the Evangelist, the dust of which, carefully gathered up, was said to effect wonderful cures.[2]

(1) The author of the Preaching of St. Peter, which is very ancient, quoted by St. Clement of Alexandria, makes that apostle say that we must not adore God with the Jews, because, although they profess to acknowledge only one God, they adore the angels.—(Clem. Alex., l. v.)

(2) St. Augustin speaks of miraculous cures wrought by the dust from the

St. Stephen, the first martyr, whose relics worked so many miracles attested by St. Augustin, and who died before the Blessed Virgin, was in like manner early invoked by the primitive Christians, who also paid veneration to the blessed relics of St. Ignatius and St. Polycarp.[1] St. Asterius of Amasea has preserved, in a sermon on the martyrs, this prayer addressed by a Christian woman of the early times to a saint whose tomb she visited: "You invoked the martyrs before you were yourself a martyr; you found when you sought; be then liberal of those good things which you have received."

Eusebius of Cæsarea, who flourished towards the end of the third century, defending our holy doctrines against the sophisms of idolaters, dwells upon the honours which they paid to their ancient heroes, to justify the veneration of saints, and continues in these terms: "We honour, as the friends of God, those who have combated for the true religion; we go to their tombs; we offer our vows to them, professing to believe that we are powerfully assisted by God through their intercession."[2]

These words of Eusebius, who in his twofold character, as bishop and historian, must have been well informed, plainly point out an ancient usage, a custom approved by the church, and generally received. On the other hand, Vigilantius and AErius, enemies to the veneration of the saints, were openly treated as

tomb of St. John the Evangelist. There is still to be seen, at this day, among the ruins of Ephesus, the church of St. John, of which the Turks had made a mosque.

(1) The history of the martyrdom of St. Polycarp, written in the form of an epistle, in the name of the church of Smyrna, by those who had been themselves witnesses of it, and addressed to the church of Philadelphia, contains these words: "We afterwards taking away his bones, more exquisite than the most precious gems, and more valuable than gold, deposited them in a decent place. In which place also assembled, as we hope to be, in exultation and joy, our Lord will grant us to celebrate the natal day of his martyrdom, as well in memory of those who have endured conflicts, as for the exercise and encouragement of future generations." St. Polycarp consummated his sacrifice in the year 166, on the 23rd of January—the day on which the church of Smyrna celebrated the feast of it in the middle of the third century, as we see by the Acts of St. Peter.

(2) Præpar. Evang., lib. xiii. c. 7.

innovators and heretics by St. Epiphanius, St. Jerome, and St. Augustin. But is it to be supposed that these great doctors would have dared to call men heretics and *innovators*, who laboured only to re-establish the ancient doctrine of the church in its native purity? That word *innovators* settles the whole question; and we must not lose sight of the fact, that Vigilantius lived at a time so near to the age of the apostles, that there were only between them and him the lives of three old men!

St. Cyprian, who was martyred at Carthage, in the year 261, exhibits to us the Christians of Africa hastening in crowds to the glorious tombs of the martyrs, celebrating funereal feasts on the day of their anniversary, and so eager to invoke them, that not even waiting for their death, they went to implore the prayers of the confessors imprisoned by the pagans, whom the torture had left alive.[1] St. John Chrysostom, on his part, informs us that in his time the tombs of the martyrs formed the brightest ornament of royal cities; that the days dedicated to them were days of joy; that the great men of the empire, and the emperor himself, put off the pompous insignia of their power before they ventured to pass over the threshold of the holy places, where those glorious sepulchres were found of the servants of a crucified God. . . . . "How much more illustrious than the tombs of kings," exclaims the great Christian orator, "are those monuments erected to those ancient men who were humble and poor among men! Around the tombs of kings reign silence and solitude; here a great concourse of people crowd together."[2]

Such was the religious veneration (of the saints) called *dulia*, which Protestants stigmatise as idolatrous and detestable, in those ages which they themselves call, by pre-eminence, *the pure ages*.[3]

As regards the veneration of *hyperdulia* (of the Blessed Virgin), which, without being adoration, which God forbid, is far superior to that of the saints, it began, to all appearance, from her very

(1) S. Cypr., Epist. 28.
(2) S. Chrysost., Hom. 66 ad pop. Antioch.
(3) Daillé, in his book of Traditions des Latins, lib. iv. c. 16.

tomb. The Jewish doctors have preserved, in the Talmud, an historical fact long unknown, which establishes the high antiquity of this pious homage, against which they expend themselves in blasphemies. A tradition of the temple, preserved in their Toldos,—that book where the Blessed Virgin is so insultingly treated, and which they very early circulated in Persia, Greece, and wherever they could injure infant Christianity,—relates that the *Nazareans*, who came to pray at the tomb of the Mother of Jesus, underwent a violent persecution on the part of the princes of the Synagogue, and that it cost a hundred Christians, related to Jesus Christ, their lives, for having erected an oratory over her tomb.[1] This act of barbarous fanaticism, of which they make a boast, being quite on a par with their conduct towards St. Stephen, St. James, and St. Paul, and the oratory erected over a tomb held in veneration, having nothing about it to clash with their traditions or manners, this fact, it appears to us, may be considered authentic, without incurring the imputation of excessive credulity.

Tradition, attested by religious monuments, assures us that the religious homage paid to Mary is of apostolic institution. St. Peter, when he went to Antioch, is said to have erected in one of the cities of ancient Phœnicia, an oratory to the Blessed Virgin, and inaugurated it with great solemnity. St. John the apostle placed the beautiful church of Lydda under the invocation of his adopted mother; the first church at Milan was dedicated to Mary by the apostle St. Barnabas. Our Lady *del Pilar*, in Spain, and Our Lady of Carmel, in Syria, dispute the priority with these churches, and set up a bolder, but more disputable claim. According to the Spanish tradition,[2] the Blessed Virgin appeared, before her death, to St. James, on the banks of the Ebro, and commanded him to build a church in the place where he then was. According to the Syrian tradition, the prophet Agabus, the same who foretold the famine which happened under

(1) Toldos Huldr., p. 115.
(2) Cronologia sacra . . . al año 35 de Cristo.

Claudius, erected in like manner, during the lifetime of the Blessed Virgin, that church which is visible so far off at sea, and where pilgrims and travellers, of all religions and all nations of the globe, receive hospitality, so moving, in the name of Mary. Without disputing the antiquity of these two sanctuaries, certainly very venerable, and justly reverenced by the people, we may be allowed to say that there is little probability that the Blessed Virgin, the most humble of the daughters of Eve, would have required altars of the apostles in her lifetime. That the gratitude of the people, and the piety of the apostles, may have erected them to her after her death, is natural enough; but that she gave orders for them during her life, is doubtful.

As for the oratory of Carmel, Flavius Josephus, who speaks directly of the disciples of Elias, with reference to Vespasian, to whom one of them promised the empire, does not any where say that they were converted to Christianity, and the contrary would be inferred from his account. This negative authority carries great weight.

FIRST EPOCH:
RELIGIOUS VENERATION OF MARY BEFORE CONSTANTINE.

CHAPTER II.

THE EAST. IDOLS.

As already mentioned, the religious veneration of the Mother of God had for its cradle her very tomb; and the first lamp lighted up in honour of Mary was a sepulchral lamp, around which the Christians of Jerusalem came to pray. This, apparently, did not last long: the synagogue, violent, like every power beset with the dread of expiring, and suspicious like all who have a bad

conscience, was alarmed at the innocent homage paid to the mother of the young prophet, whom they had not only refused, notwithstanding his miracles, to acknowledge as the Messias, but whom they had audaciously crucified, as a seditious man and an impostor, between two thieves. They extinguished the lamps, silenced the hymns, and put to death without mercy the earliest servants of Mary; at least it is they themselves who assure us of the fact, and they were very capable of so doing! They did this out of fanaticism, partly from self-love and partly from fear. They would not have that Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had unjustly condemned to a disgraceful punishment, exalted with his followers after the ignominy of Golgotha. It was annoying to them to hear that the Galilean, whom they called a son of Belial, and whose miracles they accounted empty impostures, was God, and his Mother a great saint; and then they were afraid that this new kind of veneration, which was akin to the religion of the tombs, supported as it was by the incontestable miracles which the apostles wrought at Jerusalem, might have an *evil* influence upon the *volatile* minds of the multitude, and provoke a *dangerous* reaction in favour of the crucified prophet. And as they had openly avowed to John and Peter, they had no wish to be called to account by the people for the blood of Jesus.

On all these accounts, the senators and chief priests went a step farther in the slippery descent of orime, to maintain the rectitude of the abominable sentence which they had extorted from the Romans, and they took great credit to themselves for having stifled the veneration of the Blessed Virgin in its infancy. Their impious expectation was disappointed. The most furious and best obeyed tyrants, in the dark fantasies of their cruelty, cannot destroy remembrance—that flower of the soul which expands, mysterious and consolatory, in the inaccessible region of our ideas, and which the power of the storm of persecution only causes to take deeper root. That of the Blessed Virgin resisted this Jewish hurricane; hymns were no more sung in her cave, but people always came thither to weep, and the tears which devotion causes us to shed are as valuable as the frankincense

of Saba, which comes forth too from the wounded bark, in the form of tears.

Violently uprooted by the sacrilegious hands of the princes of that people rejected by God, the religious veneration of Mary was transplanted by the apostles to a foreign soil still idolatrous. They lived to see it dawn in Syria, Mesopotamia, Asia Minor, Egypt, and Spain. It is true that this veneration, so tender and so poetical, which was to take place of the impure and seductive worship of the divinities of Olympus, shone at first only like a small star in the zenith of certain cities; for Christianity was at first only the religion of towns, and even of the common people of towns. Paganism, repudiated by serious minds, despised by philosophers, ridiculed in the theatres where *the testament of the defunct Jupiter* was publicly read, and railed at with malice perfectly Voltairean by the young epicureans of the court of the Cæsars,[1] still possessed notwithstanding an incredible number of partisans; allied to numerous interests, defended by prejudice and ancient superstitions, attractive by the splendour of its festivals, and intermixed with all glorious memories, though in its decline, it shone in splendour. Proud of its advantages, at first it would not deign to fear *the carpenter's son* and the young *spinster of Nazareth.*[2] How should it fear them? It did not see them. The religion of the God who was poor, and of his holy mother, made noiseless progress along the rough and painful pathway of the common people; it addressed itself by preference to the artisan, to the wife, to the slave, to all who were little, feeble, and oppressed by the society of paganism, that society profoundly egotistical, avaricious, effeminate, and corrupted, which was brilliant and cold as its own marble divinities.

It was soon perceived that the moral world, that aged Titan bordering on decrepitude, became young again under the potent

(1) The witticism of that courtier of Nero is well known, who, when abused and threatened by an old priestess, one of whose sacred geese he had killed, called out in a tone of derision, as he threw her two pieces of gold, "Here, this is to buy gods and geese."

(2) See Celsus.

and secret influence of some regenerating charm. What sorceress had restored to this new Æson the active and ardent blood of his youthful years? What Prometheus had mounted up to heaven, to bring down thence to man, frozen to death by egotism, a spark of sacred fire? For it was impossible to mistake the fact; society was in labour with something strange and grand, which was to restore to it its potent and juvenile attractions; it was visibly becoming again what it was in the beautiful times so much regretted by Horace, when it despised pomp, honoured the gods, and proudly gloried in its poverty. Already, invisible, but persevering hands seemed to have raised up again, from their ruins beneath the grass, the ancient altar of modesty, and the austere temples of faith, honour, and virtue. Beneficence, which no longer beheld the smoke of sacrifices, since material enjoyments were pursued with frenzy, was apparently beginning again to be mysteriously honoured. The ancient equality of the age of Saturn showed itself anew here and there upon the earth. In fine, humanity carried in its arms those infants who were exposed by the elegant matrons of pagan society on the banks of rivers, in the deep recesses of forests, on the brink of precipices, where eagles, wandering dogs, and wild beasts tore to pieces their little warm and bleeding limbs.[1] Supporting with one manly hand the labourer panting under the weight of his toil, Charity held out the other to the infirm old man, abandoned on the steps of the temples. O ye gods of Greece, ye travelling deities who were hospitably entertained beneath the thatch of Philemon and Baucis, did you again perambulate the earth to re-establish therein the beautiful reign of virtue? No; for you were, as the Scripture says, deaf gods, helpless gods, blind gods; or, to speak better, you were nothing.

Behold! amid that soft, smiling society, crowned with roses, and drinking out of golden cups to the gods of Olympus, there

(1) Philo gives details enough to make one's hair stand on end, on that abominable custom of exposing children forsaken. The Jews alone at that time condemned that barbarous practice.

appear, from time to time, groups with noble countenances, and severe comportment, who turn away their eyes from these pagan orgies with indignation mixed with irony. . . . . . Can they be Stoic philosophers? No; for they shed a tear of compassion over the poor man who begs of them, before they slip into his hand, as they hurry away, the rich alms which fills him with astonishment. Is it that young female then, a vestal virgin, who walks, with her hands joined and her eyes cast down, by the side of her mother, who is veiled like herself? No; for she has neither embroidered fillets, nor her dress bordered with the purple of the *Amatæ*,[1] and her only ornament is modesty. Those widows at twenty, who no more rekindle the torch of hymen,[2] while the grand ladies of paganism reckon their divorces by the consulships,[3] whence come they? And those young men, who reverently bow before the aged, blush like young women, and are not the less brave like lions in war, who are they? They are not seen in the theatre; they do not frequent the circus; they do not figure in the pagan mysteries with garlands of flowers or baskets of sacred fruits upon their heads; and they passed before the pompous temples of Greece and Rome without entering them. The sight of a sacrifice makes them fly away, and they shake their dark mantles well when a few drops of the lustral water chance to fall upon them. In a word, they would rather die than touch any meats which had been offered to the gods. Can these be wicked men, these men whose hands heal up with gold the frightful wounds of misery, and whose manners breathe purity? No; for they assemble together three times in the day, and sometimes in the

(1) The vestals bore the name of *Amatæ* in memory of Amata, the first Roman virgin who consecrated herself to the worship of Vesta.—(Aulus Gellius, lib. i. c. 12.)

(2) The austere continency of the Christian women extorted cries of admiration from the pagans themselves. St. John Chrysostom has related that the famous sophist Libanius, whose lectures on oratory he attended, learning from him that his mother had been a widow from the age of twenty, and would never take a second husband, exclaimed, turning to his idolatrous auditory, "O gods of Greece, what women are to be found among these Christians!"—(Sancti Chrysostomi vita.)

(3) Seneca, Treatise on Acts of Kindness, lib. iii.

night,[1] to pray in common, with their hands lifted up towards heaven, to a God unknown; and upon the altar of their former household gods, the lamp of which, fixed in marble, is always burning,[2] is seen the benignant image of a young female of Asia, half veiled in light blue drapery,[3] holding in her arms a divine Infant. This woman, with a countenance calm and clear as the waves of the Egean sea when Zephyr gently moves them with the tip of his airy wing, is the inspirer of modesty, of chastity, of devotion, and of mercy; the guardian of honour, the protectress of the domestic hearth; in a word, she is that sweet Virgin Mary, to whom the Greeks have given the name of *Panagia* (Παναγία), which means, all holy.

Asia claims the honour of having been the first to set up oratories and chapels under the invocation of Mary; the oldest of these sanctuaries was Our Lady of Tortosa, which St. Peter himself founded, according to the Oriental traditions, on the coast of Phœnicia. These earliest Syrian churches were only at first very simple edifices, with roofs of cedar and latticed windows. The altar was turned towards the west, like that of Jerusalem, and the choir was enclosed with a screen of open woodwork, in memory of the celebrated veil of the Holy of Holies. There were crosses in these churches; and very soon there were also images of Mary, since tradition records that she was painted upon one of the

(1) The first Christians assembled for prayer at the hours of Tierce, Sext, and None, as it is noted in the Acts of the Apostles; they spent the night in prayer on the eves of great feasts, and sung hymns in honour of Jesus Christ, as St. Basil and Socrates testify.

(2) The gods who were called indifferently *Lares* or *Penates* were the tutelary gods of houses. They had their worship. Incense and wine were offered to them; they were crowned with flowers, and a lamp was lighted before their little statues. There was found under the earth at Lyons, in 1505, a copper lamp with two beaks, the chain of which was fixed into a piece of marble which bore this inscription :—

" Laribus sacrum.
P. F. Romum."

Which means, "To the public felicity of the Romans."

(3) In the oldest pictures of the Blessed Virgin, which are painted on wood, the great antiquity of which is undisputed, she almost always wears a blue veil.

pillars of the beautiful church of Lydda, which her adopted son had dedicated to her, and that St. Luke presented to the cathedral of Antioch a portrait of the Blessed Virgin, painted by himself. This picture, to which it was confidently said that the Mother of God had attached her favours, became so famous, that the Empress Pulcheria had it brought to Constantinople, where she built a magnificent church for its reception.

Edessa, the capital city of that king, Abgarus, who was on the point of making war upon the Jews to avenge the death of our Lord, and who was withheld solely by the fear of incurring the anger of the Romans, their masters, according to Eusebius, had also, in the first century, his church of Our Lady adorned with a miraculous image. Egypt boasts of having had, about the same time, its Church of Our Lady of Alexandria, and the Spanish Saragossa, then called Cæsar-Augusta, its celebrated sanctuary of Our Lady *del Pilar*. But in no place in the world was the religious veneration of Mary welcomed with more enthusiasm than in Asia Minor. Ephesus, where the memory of the Blessed Virgin still lived, soon built in honour of Mary the *Miriam*, a superb cathedral, in which, in the fifth century, was held the famous council which secured her beautiful title of Mother of God.

This example was followed from one end to the other of the immense territory of Rome. Phrygia, having become Christian, forgot her Trojan deities sung by Homer; Cappadocia let the sacred fires go out for want of fuel, which the Persians had kindled there by the side of the elegant temples of Greece; and the caverns, which but a short time before had lent their gloomy recesses to the bloody mysteries of Mithra,[1] became during the

(1) The worship of Mithra, before it reached Greece and Rome, had previously passed from Persia into Cappadocia, where Strabo, who had travelled there, says that he had seen a great number of priests of Mithra. The mysteries of Mithra, which were celebrated in the depths of caverns, were something horrible, according to the holy fathers. Human victims were there immolated, as appears by a fact related by Socrates in his ecclesiastical history, that the Christians of Alexandria having discovered a cave which had been long closed up, in

persecutions for religion—which broke out nowhere with greater fury than among the Greek colonies—a place of refuge for the Christians and their proscribed God. At last, the gods of Greece, those indigenous deities sprung from the bright foam of the Egean sea, born beneath the palm-trees of the Cyclades, which are still standing, or cradled in the shade of woods which crown the lofty mountains of Crete, were abandoned for the God who died on Calvary, and the Virgin of Nazareth; and so perfectly forsaken, that Pliny the Younger, on his arrival in Bithynia, of which he had just been appointed governor, wrote to Trajan that Christianity had taken possession, not only of the cities but of the country, so that he had found the temples of the gods of the empire deserted.[1]

Asia Minor possessed, from the earliest times, miraculous images of our Blessed Lady. The two most celebrated were that of Dydinia, where St. Basil went to pray for the afflicted church in the reign of Julian; and that of Sosopoli, a picture painted on wood, from which exuded a wonderful kind of oil which effected astonishing cures, which were the subject of discussion at the second council of Nice.

Greece, that distinguished country of letters and arts, was not backward either in honouring Mary. In the time of St. Paul, Corinth, where Grecian freedom, like a lamp expiring, had cast its last rays before it was extinguished, became almost entirely converted to Christianity. The faithful assembled at first in the spacious halls of private houses, where the Blessed Virgin was solemnly invoked. By degrees, the temples of paganism were thinned, and a century later only travellers and curious persons climbed up the steep sides of the Acro-Ceraunium to visit the temple of Venus, the lofty porticoes of which, rising above the verdant ocean of the trees, were traced upon the sky of Greece, the blue of which is so soft. The protecting goddess of the

which it was handed down by tradition that the Mithriac rites had been formerly celebrated, they found there human bones and skulls, which they took out to exhibit to the people of that great city.

(1) Plin., lib. x. epist. 97.

Corinthians had been dethroned by that holy female who restored in their effeminate country modesty, which was disowned, and maternity, which was despised. Thanks to her, pure family pleasures, the exquisite enjoyments of the domestic hearth, were, without difficulty, substituted for the shameful disorders, the monstrous orgies, and the depraved manners of that little republic, which had always been seen to shine in the foremost rank among corrupt commonwealths. Corinth, transformed, became a Christian Sparta, and the eulogium which St. Clement pronounces upon its church, towards the end of the first century, gives us a marvellous idea of its fervour.

Arcadia, the forests of which were peopled with rustic deities, and where each wild cavern and every murmuring stream had its altar, abjured also, but less speedily, the worship of Pan and the nymphs, for the veneration of the humble Virgin, whose divine Infant had been pleased to receive for his earliest homage the artless adoration of the shepherds. But as old superstitions are more difficult to eradicate in the country than elsewhere, it was for a long time believed in those Arcadian hamlets, that Diana hunted in the deep recesses of the great forests of Mænalus and Lycæus. Young and credulous shepherdesses, divided between Christian dogmas and the superstitions of their forefathers, imagined that they saw sometimes by the uncertain light of the moon beautiful white Dryads among the trees, Naïads pensively hanging down their heads on the margins of fountains, or frolicsome Napææ dancing upon the golden buds and daisies of the meadows. But towards the time of Constantine, the Blessed Virgin had decidedly prevailed over deified nature; and the numberless churches in her name, which still adorn the rural sites of the ancient Pelasgi, attest the profound attachment of the Arcadians to her veneration.

Elis, in like manner, very early built a church in honour of the Blessed Virgin, on the banks of its river Alpheus, sacred to romantic adventures; and as it was surrounded with noble vineyards, gave it the name of our Lady of Grapes.

Macedonia took the lead of Greece, properly so called, in

the veneration paid to Mary: Thessalonica had a bishop's see in the time of the apostles; and there is still to be seen a superb basilica, with pillars of jasper, which the people of Alexandria had dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, and which the Turks have converted into a mosque.[1]

Nero, travelling in Peloponnesus, had not dared to pass the frontiers of Laconia; the austere shade of Sparta had affrighted him. The meek and timid Virgin of Galilee was braver than Cæsar; she passed over the Eurotas, which hides its low waters beneath rose-bays, and presented herself to the people of Leonidas, whose ancient virtue had been again steeped in the bitter but strengthening waters of poverty. She was received with enthusiasm, and they hastened to build the most beautiful church in Greece to the young foreign Virgin, who came to teach the young women of Sparta to keep their eyes cast down.

Since then, Mary has reigned in Sparta with absolute power; for her the first violets expand, which the Eurotas sees blossoming on its banks; before the picture of her, rudely painted in red and blue upon the walls of their dwellings, the young maidens of Lacedæmonia light up every evening a lamp of clay or bronze, a pious action which the Greek *improvisatrices*, who sing the praises of the dead, do not fail to celebrate on days of funeral obsequies. Lastly, the inhabitants of Laconia substituted the names of Christ and of the Blessed Virgin, wherever their forefathers used the name of Jupiter in their affirmations; and this form of oath grew so much into use that the Turks of Misistra themselves, before the Greek revolution, instead of swearing by Allah and Mahomet, like the other Osmanlis, used to swear, like the Greeks of Sparta, by the Blessed Virgin.[2]

The elegant and learned Athens, celebrated for its monuments, the finest in the world, and its schools frequented by the flower of the studious youth of Europe and Asia, was slower in its conversion to Christianity than the other countries of Greece.

(1) Wheeler's Travels.
(2) Pouqueville, Voyage en Morée, t. i.

From the early times, however, it had had a bishop, and a church dedicated to Mary, Our Lady *Spiliotissa* (of the grotto); but polytheism kept its ground under the brilliant ægis of Minerva, and Athens was at the same time full of Christian churches and idols. It was in one of these churches that Julian the Apostate, by order of the Emperor Constantius, filled the office of lector; but it was in the Parthenon that he went to plan the re-establishment of idolatry, as he read Homer.

That the veneration of the Blessed Virgin had a powerful influence on the propagation of the gospel in Greece and Asia, is a fact which the manners and tastes of the Levantines would have rendered probable, even if it had not been attested, before all the Oriental bishops, by St. Cyril, at the first council of Ephesus, in a discourse which has remained to our times. "Hail to thee, holy Mother of God," said this holy and learned bishop, "by whom churches have been founded throughout the world."[1]

On the other side of the Great Sea, several tribes of Arabs had been converted to Christianity, and greatly honoured Mary, the *Sultana of Heaven*, as they still call her. Seated beneath the shade of the date palms, or the tamarisk with its green fruits, which loves the margin of salt springs, and inhaling with delight the coolness which accompanies the night in their burning sands,[2] the tellers of tales among the Christian tribes, by the light of those eternal lamps of God, which they believe to be fastened with golden chains to the ceiling of the firmament,[3] related the principal facts of the life of the Blessed Virgin,

(1) S. Cyr. Alex. Oper., t. v. p. 2.

(2) While the sun is above the horizon, as the heat is excessive in their climate, the Arabs usually keep within their tents. They come out when the sun is near setting, and then enjoy the charms of the most beautiful sky and the cool air. The night is partly to them what the day is to us. Thus their poets never celebrate the praises of a fine day, but those words, "Leili! leili!"—"O night! O night!" are repeated in all their songs.—(Sav., note on the c. 7 of the Koran.)

(3) The first heaven is of pure silver; on its beautiful ceiling are suspended the stars with strong chains of gold.—(Koran, the Legend of Mahomet, by Savary, p. 15.)

colouring them with that tinge of the marvellous which is so agreeable to the children of Ismael. They told, according to the Arab gospel of the infancy of Christ and the traditions of the desert, how the holy angels came to bring to the Blessed Virgin, in the temple where her tutor Zachary had placed her, fine dates, aromatic grapes, figs sweeter than honey, and odoriferous flowers, gathered in those celestial gardens which abound in limpid springs and green trees: for Paradise in hot climates has always been composed of cool waters and delightful shades. And then they related, still in their own way, the prodigies of the birth of Jesus, which they still call, though since become Mussulmans, *Al milad* (the birth by excellence). They placed the scene in a desert, on the margin of a spring, and at the foot of a withered palm-tree, without branches and without foliage, which was suddenly covered with leaves and fruit, at the voice of the angel Gabriel, whom God had sent to Mary, to dry up her tears. These marvellous narratives increased their veneration for the Blessed Virgin; they believed that in course of time they should be able to adore her in heaven whom the angels had served upon earth, and indeed they offered her oblations of cakes made of flour and honey: hence they got the name of *collyridians*, from the word κολλυρὶὀς (a cake). St. Epiphanius strongly condemned them for this worship, which exceeded legitimate limits; and taught them that oblation and sacrifice must be offered to God alone. On the other hand, the idolatrous Arabs had placed the image of Mary in the Caaba, among the angels, whom they represented under the form of young women, and whom they called *the daughters of God.*[1] Mary, whom they had made the sister of those pure spirits, received equally with them divine honours. Victims were immolated to her, decorated with green leaves and flowers; they offered to her the earliest ears of corn of the harvest, as well as the first dates of the palm-trees, and, in golden vases, the foaming milk of the sacred camels.[2] The figure of the Blessed

(1) Geladeddin, note on the 16 c. of the Koran.
(2) The Arab idolaters had several female camels consecrated to the gods of

Virgin, holding the divine Infant in her arms, remained in the temple of Mecca till the time of Mahomet, who had it removed with the genii and angels.

The holy name of Mary began to be invoked among the people who dwell between the Caspian Sea and the Euxine; but, alas! the sanctuaries of Judea were profaned by the Greek and Syriac idols, which were not overthrown till the time of Constantine. The statue of Jupiter was sacrilegiously erected on the spot where Mary in tears had seen Christ crucified, and they offered sacrifice to Adonis in the cave of Bethlehem.

CHAPTER III.

THE WEST. THE CATACOMBS.

THE sacred vine of Christianity already flourished in Asia so as to extend its holy branches over a multitude of people;[1] but it took root more slowly in the West. Rome, thoroughly idolatrous —Rome, drunk with the blood of martyrs, which she had made to flow like water, defended polytheism with all her power, and her power extended over the world. In the East, a mysterious sign, which made Satan start from the depths of his fiery realms, announced that the kingdom of God was at hand; but in Italy, and in those regions situated beyond the Alps, Christianity was as yet only in the condition of a secret society; people joined it with all kinds of precautions and mysteries; the members

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Caaba; the cream of their milk served to make libations.—(Savary, in a note on the 5 c. of the Koran.) The inhabitants of Mexico offered a portion of their fruits and flocks to God, and another to their idols.—(Geladeddin, note on the 6 c. of the Koran.)

(1) We learn from Arnobius and Eusebius that the Gospel, in the first three centuries, had extended far beyond the domination of the Romans, among the Persians, Parthians, Scythians, and many others whom they do not mention.—(Arnob., Adv. Gentes, lib. ii. c. 12; Euseb., Demonstr. Evang., lib. iii. c. 5.)

recognised each other by certain conventional signs; and, no doubt, the sign of the cross, the origin of which is unknown, was one of those mysterious signs which made known a Christian stranger to his brethren scattered among the crowd. Not that the Christians of the Western regions were few in number—they could already have formed armies; but, persecuted by idolatrous rulers, tracked like wild beasts, and finding no support from the Roman laws, which took cognisance of them only to punish them, they lived isolated "as a dew from the Lord, and as drops upon the grass, which waiteth not for man, nor tarrieth for the children of men."[1]

The earliest Latin churches were domestic chapels, and the first altars portable chests of wood, like the ark, in the form of which they were made, with rings of brass.[2] Those primitive churches of Rome, which already existed before the arrival of St. Paul, were chiefly composed of Greeks and Jews converted to Christianity; but the Roman people soon heard of this new law, which declared that all men are brethren, that they are equal, and bound to love one another. They found this holy law beautiful; they wished to follow it, and came in crowds to receive the regenerating waters of Baptism. It was then found, to the great surprise of every one, says Tacitus, that there was in Rome an immense number of Christians.[3] The priests of the idols were in commotion; Nero, the emperor and supreme pontiff, took the alarm, and persecutions began.[4]

(1) Mich. v. 7.

(2) One of these altars, on which it is believed that St. Peter celebrated the divine mysteries, and which Pope Sylvester enclosed beneath the high altar of St. John Lateran, was examined on the 29th of March, 1658, under Alexander VII., by the Chevalier Baromini, accompanied by the sacristan major of the basilica; it is four palms long by eight palms wide. Its shape is that of a chest. The altar was carried by means of several rings.

(3) Tacit., Annal., lib. xv. c. 44.

(4) The pretence for this first persecution was the burning of Rome, which Nero had set fire to himself, and then accused the Christians of it. It was extremely cruel: the Christians were wrapped in cloths dipped in pitch, or other combustible matter; then they set fire to them, so that they served for torches to give light in the night. Nero made a spectacle of it in his gardens, where he

They assembled at first where they could, as St. Justin martyr replied to the prefect of Rome, who wanted to know where these assemblies were held, and who did not get to know; but the halls and upper chambers of private houses becoming too confined, and the searches made by the senate more rigorous every day, it became necessary to look out for a temple vast enough to contain a great multitude of people, and yet so concealed as to elude the investigations of that swarm of informers who were, at that time, to the empire a scourge, which might be compared to the plagues of Egypt. Some courageous Christians proposed the catacombs. There were to be found immense gloomy halls, interminable avenues, where the darkness was so great, says St. Jerom, that it seemed like descending alive into the grave, and the walls of which were covered with buried bodies. This labyrinth of coffins, with ways out impossible to find, where to go without a guide was the sure way to perish; those vaults which turned the head giddy, and beneath which reigned perpetual silence, fear, and death, had no terrors for the first faithful of Rome. On Sunday they assembled in this frightful metropolitan church, to read the writings of the apostles or prophets; then they offered, upon a shapeless altar, the sacrifice of bread and wine, which was preceded by a sermon, and followed by a collection for the poor.[1] A few rude frescoes, representing our Saviour, or Mary, which may yet be seen, half gone, in the catacombs of Naples and Rome, were the only decoration of this place of prayer, where the assembly consisted of ten generations of the departed, and one of the living. What a temple! Instead of vessels of gold, set with precious stones, they had chalices of wood! Instead of Roman lamps of massive silver, mournful torches! Instead of rich spoils, the terrible trophies of the angel of death! On each side, in front, before, and behind the place where the assembly of the faithful crowded

himself drove chariots by the light of these very dreadful torches.—(See Hist. Eccles., t. i. p. 98.)

(1) Apolog. S. Just.

together, were long subterraneous avenues, where torches gleamed at intervals in the distance, and where veiled figures were seen moving like spectres! Beneath their feet was the dust of a republic, which had borne off its virtues in the folds of its great winding-sheet: terror within; and without, in case of discovery, the amphitheatre, the arena of which was red like a wound, to such degree had Christian blood been shed there in torrents.

When we reflect on these things, we ask ourselves in astonishment what intrepid heroes came to brave these terrors? . . . . Those heroes who confronted fear and death were poor ignorant men, who had grown up in the midst of the auguries, the presages, and the thousand superstitious fears of paganism; they were timid virgins, accustomed to flourish apart from the world, like solitary roses;[1] opulent and fair patrician ladies, served by legions of slaves, who slept upon couches of massive gold, eat upon tables of citron wood, lived in apartments inlaid with ivory, and walked upon marble slabs sprinkled with gold or silver dust; young men wrapped up in rich mantles of scarlet, who were called *Anicius*, *Olibrius*, *Probus*, or *Gracchus*;[2] in fine, the flower of the patricians; knights known by their equestrian rings, grand officers of the palace, tribunes of the people, favourites, relatives of Cæsar, whose sons were designed to succeed him in the empire.[3] . . . . What more? Imperial princesses, who crossed by night the courts of their golden palace on Mount Palatine, escorted by a few faithful slaves, and glided like ghosts outside of the city of Romulus, to go and adore in the depths of the catacombs the *Galilean*, as the haughty idolatrous aristocracy expressed themselves with disdainful contempt, and to invoke that sweet Virgin

(1) S. Ambr., de Virg., lib. i. c. 6.

(2) See Prudentius, in his two books against Symmachus. According to this author, the family of Anicius was the first patrician family who embraced Christianity at Rome.

(3) Flavius Clement, cousin german of Domitian, and whose two sons had been intended by the emperor himself for his successors in the empire, was put to death for being a Christian, having hardly ended his consulship. The princess Domitilla, his wife, a Christian like himself, was banished to an island.—(Hist. Eccles., t. i. p. 105.)

Mary, for whom the noble descendants of the Gracchi and the Scipios abandoned their favourite temple of Juno Lucina.[1]

If the Tiber had overflowed, or rain did not fall, or an earthquake had happened, and the Roman people, to avert their disasters, had cried out as usual, "The Christians to the lions!"[2] coffins were brought before the altar, full of bones collected in the amphitheatre. Then a shout of triumph, sweetly adapted to psalmody, arising from the bowels of the earth, mingled with the continued noise of the waters which the aqueducts carried above the walls of Rome, and the soft and gentle waving of the tall Italian poplars, which resembles the murmur of the rivulets. Oftentimes the bishop, a holy old man, leaning on a poor actual shepherd's crook, reproved those who had deserted the camp of riches, and who came to adore the poor King, for a lingering attachment to Roman luxury. He told the grand ladies, who listened to him in a pensive attitude, that it did not become Christian women to wear in rings and bracelets, "the subsistence of a thousand poor people." Some days after that, people asked one another what one of the daughters of the Anicii had done with her jewels. The poor, both pagan and Christian, round about her could have answered, by showing bread and even gold! Or else he declaimed against slavery; and the next day it was everywhere repeated with profound surprise, that a certain prefect of the palace had just given freedom to five hundred slaves. There it was that, above all, charity was inculcated; and what kind of charity? "Almsgiving is a mystery," said the priest of Jesus Christ, "when you exercise it, shut the doors!"

And when they came out from those assemblies where fervour was rekindled, the poor women among the people went to collect on the banks of the Tiber the children which were exposed there by the grand idolatrous ladies; patrician dames set apart a

(1) The temple of Juno Lucina was frequented by preference by the grandest ladies of Rome; it was forbidden to courtesans to enter it; it was there that mothers made vows for rich matches for their daughters.

(2) Apolog. Tertull.

portion of their palaces for hospitals, and young Christian noblemen undertook journeys to a distance to succour their brethren of Africa or Asia. These acts of charity, self-denial, and devotedness struck the pagans with surprise, who were unable even to understand them, so far were they from being able to perform them.[1]

The noble matrons of Rome wore at that time figures of Mary engraved upon emeralds, cornelians, or sapphires, and bequeathed them at their death to their daughters as symbols of their faith. Galla, the widow of Symmachus, caused a superb church to be built long after, to deposit therein one of those precious stones, as a relic of a persecuted faith: the workmanship of it was so fine that it was thought to have proceeded from a superhuman hand, and it was venerated as a present from heaven.[2]

Besides these religious ornaments, which served the Christian women as tokens of recognition, they exposed among flowers, upon the domestic altar where the household gods had long reigned, little images of silver or gold, representing Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin, and the apostles. These little statues, the discovery of which would have dragged a whole family to the amphitheatre, were generally small enough to be concealed at the first signal, and even to be hidden about their persons.[3]

(1) Lucianus, de Morte Peregrini.

(2) Astolfi, Delli Imagini miracclose.

(3) M. Raoul Rochette attributes the invention of these little statues to the Gnostics: but the Gnostics themselves made them much older than their sect. According to all appearance, this custom was established among the first Roman patricians who were converted to Christianity. The images of Jesus Christ, of the Blessed Virgin, and the apostles, were substituted for those of Fortune and several other divinities, which were placed, crowned with flowers, on the altar of the Lares, and which were small enough to be carried about the person, if needed. One of these little statues, representing Harpocrates, the god of silence, was recovered in Brittany; it was of gold, two inches long, and weighed two louis.—(See Hist. Eccles. de Bret., t. iii. p. 358.) It is known, moreover, that the ancients hung round their necks, or fastened to their garments, small images of Fortune. Thence came the custom of wearing Madonnas, doves representing the Holy Ghost, and crosses of gold or precious stones. Unable to do away with that ancient custom, the church, who is perfectly wise, merely changed its object.

A little later, private chapels received the bodies of the martyrs, which they clothed in white, and very precious robes, and interred with magnificence in marble sarcophagi. During the last persecutions, Aglae, a rich and beautiful Roman matron, sent for one even to the interior of Bithynia, where the Roman governors, absolute men, who traded in everything, even dead bodies, sold them very dear.[1]

In the interval between one persecution and another, the Christians collected their dead in cemeteries situated outside the walls of Rome, and often went there to pray. The walls of these cemeteries, painted in fresco, represented Jesus Christ upon his tribunal, in the severe and imposing attitude which befits the sovereign Judge of mankind; and, near him, Mary, in a Roman veil, was ready to implore his mercy for sinners.[2]

During the halcyon days of the reign of Alexander Severus, the Christians of Rome, knowing that this prince honoured Jesus Christ, whose image he had set up in his *lararium*, among the holy souls,[3] and reckoning upon the support of his mother, the Empress Mamea, who was a Christian, requested and obtained, in spite of the clamours of the idolatrous priests, permission to build a church on the site of a decayed and deserted dwelling. It was the first that dared to raise its cross alongside of the marble temples of the gods of the empire; it was dedicated to Mary, and took the name of Our Lady beyond the Tiber.

Christianity, violently oppressed in Italy, was cruelly persecuted in Gaul, where it made very little perceptible progress according to Sulpicius Severus, who wrote in the fourth century. There were, nevertheless, in the third century, a few bishoprics: among others, that of Paris, founded by St. Denis, who suffered martyrdom in 272, during the persecution of Valerian; and that of Lyons, where St. Pothinus had established the religious vene-

(1) Simplician, governor of Cilicia, sold to the servants of the martyr Boniface the body of their master for five hundred golden crowns.

(2) A very ancient painting of the cemetery of St. Calixtus, at Rome, also represents the Blessed Virgin in this costume.

(3) Lamprid., in Alex. Sev., c. 29—31.

ration of Mary. Missionaries, among whom we see figuring even Roman knights, went all over Gaul; but these sowers of the gospel often fell beneath the impious sword of idolatrous governors, who tracked them like wild beasts,[1] before their task was much advanced. Their incomplete labours, however, were not lost; their generous blood fertilised the furrows which they had opened, and, later on, other labourers came there to put in the sickle.

The island of the Britons boasts of having been before Gaul in its conversion to Christianity, and if the most ancient chroniclers are to be believed, it had the first Christian king in the world. Venerable Bede relates that in the time of the emperors Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, a prince, named Lucius, requested of Pope Eleutherius two missionaries from Italy to preach the gospel to the little kingdom which he governed under the good pleasure of the Romans. His request was well received, and two apostolical men, to whom the Welsh later on erected altars,[2] came to preach the Gospel to the people of Great Britain, divided between Druidism, still flourishing, and *the gods of the Augustuses.* God gave a blessing to their efforts: the Britons, still semi-barbarians, issued forth in crowds from their huts, which were like bee-hives, to listen to them; and sometimes, in the midst of desert heaths strewn with enormous stones, where they went to seek after the followers of Esus, assembled by the pale moonlight[3] for some secret sacrifice, a young priestess of the Celts, who had been listening to the holy doctrine with pensive air, leaning against the *menhir*, which threw its giant shadow to a great distance, let slip out of her hands the golden sickle, beneath which the mistletoe was to have fallen, that sacred plant which grew in the furrowed bark of the oaks, and bowing before the

(1) "You have escaped us then, if you are a Christian," said Heraclius to St. Symphorian, "for there are very few of you left."

(2) Harpsfield, Hist. lib. i. c. 3.

(3) The Gauls and island Britons assembled in their temples only in the night, and when the moon was in the first quarter, or at the full; this traditional usage came down from the highest antiquity.—(Hist. Eccles. de Bret., t. iv. p. 510.)

minister of Jesus Christ, with her flaxen head still bound with the priestly wreath which confined her dishevelled hair, she cried out, with a voice full of emotion: "I am a Christian!" And the priest, taking water from the spring which was still worshipped, poured the sacred water of Baptism on the forehead of the young neophyte, who dropped her name of *Uheldeda* (sublimity), to adopt the sweet foreign name of Mary.[1]

During the persecution of Dioclesian, according to the best authorities, Christianity passed over the double wall which separated the Britons—whom their conquerors had politically enervated—from their restless and wild neighbours of the north. The isle of Britain—where Roman civilization expanded, like a pale and premature flower, in the midst of barbarism—had cities ornamented with baths, palaces of marble, temples glittering with gold, adjoining its heaths sprinkled with *menhirs*, and its dense virgin forests; but Caledonia, where the eagle of the Cæsars had not penetrated, was still the land of the torrent, the mist, and the rock, and had no other religion than a Druidism almost effaced, mixed up with cognate superstitions. All was vague and undefined, like a landscape obscured by a fog, in the belief of these people. The Druids, at variance with the great chiefs, had been driven out as early as the fourth century,[2] and their notions of one God were almost forgotten; but people believed in the spirit of the waters, the spirit of the mountains, and in an aerial palace were the shades of their forefathers, who wandered about here and there in the night on their chariots of clouds, displaying their white drapery, gilded by the moon, and holding, by way of sword, in their transparent hands, a half-extinguished meteor.[3] The Christian apostles of those regions, then almost unknown, which a cold sun illumines seemingly with regret through rainy clouds, took possession of the caves which the Druids had abandoned,[4] and fixed themselves on the borders of

(1) Venerable Bede assures us, in his Ecclesiastical History, that even at this remote period a great number of Druids became Christians.

(2) Poems of Ossian: a Dissertation concerning the Era of Ossian.

(3) See Ossian. (4) Ibid.

torrents, in the recesses of woods, or on the declivities of mountains. Sometimes it happened that a hunter in the Highlands, instead of pursuing through the mist the red deer and the roebucks, would come and sit down upon the grey stone eaten away with moss, which marked the burial-place of a warrior, to converse with the old man of the cave, the Christian *Culdee*,[1] who spoke to him of Christ and his holy Mother. With one arm thrown over his unstrung bow, and one hand placed on the head of his favourite greyhound lying at his feet, the Scottish chief listened in a respectful and attentive attitude to the grave words of the solitary: and then, when the sanctity of the Gospel had at length spoken to his heart, when, with clasped hands and a look sparkling with enthusiasm, he had said, "I believe!" all his clan repeated, like a faithful echo, "We believe too!"

Not content with having spread their doctrine in the mountainous districts, and in the plains, the priests of Christ were anxious to dislodge idolatry from the most ancient and most remote of its sanctuaries. The island of Iona, one of those isles of the archipelago of the Hebrides which are surrounded by a green and stormy sea, was held sacred by the lords of the isles and the mountain chiefs, who repaired thither to swear peace upon an ancient *dolmen*, which they called the *Stone of Power*. The *dolmen* soon disappeared, and there was seen to arise in the midst of the picturesque rocks,—which are beautified by the belladonnas, the bugloss, and the sea holly,—the most ancient and venerated of the abbeys of Scotland: the wind now moans through its venerable ruins, beneath which monarchs repose.

Four ages had passed over Christianity, which already extended from the West to the East. "We are but of yesterday," said Tertullian to the idolatrous senate of Rome, "and we fill your palaces, your cities, your fortresses, your armies on land and sea; we leave you nothing but your temples!" This was true; but what showers of blood had reddened, during this period, the great standard of the cross! The last persecution failed to root up

(1) Culdee, in Gaelic Culdich, a hermit, a solitary.

Christianity, like that plant of which Job speaks, to whom the earth, which had produced it, said, "I never knew thee!" Dioclesian had all the churches either pulled down or shut up, imprisoned the priests, put the Christian cities to the edge of the sword,[1] and promised the highest rewards to apostacy, which hardly flourished at all, notwithstanding the imperial encouragement, the Christians of that time generally preferring martyrdom. It was thought to be all over with Christianity: the idolaters clapped their hands in anticipation of its speedy fall, and hell already made its long howls of triumph heard; but the holy angels, smiling at each other, said: "Christ is very near to his victory; blessed be his name!" . . . . . . The fact was, that a young woman of Bithynia, named Helen, whom the Cæsar Constantius Chlorus had married for her virtue and singular beauty, had just brought him a son, who had been named Constantine.

SECOND EPOCH: FROM CONSTANTINE TO THE MIDDLE AGES.

CHAPTER IV.

THE EAST. THE ICONOCLASTS.

On the enchanting banks of the Bosphorus of Thrace, in sight of the distant mountains of Asia Minor, whose lofty summits are tinged every evening with a hue of gold and carmine, the coast of Europe is hollowed into a wide bay of incomparable beauty, and above the blue mantle of its shining waters, which seems to roll waves of sapphire, rises a vast city, all white and all Christian,[2]

(1) Euseb., Hist. Eccles., Sulpicius Severus.

(2) Constantine was desirous that there should not be a single idolater at Constantinople; he left the idols in profane places only, to serve as ornaments.—(Hist. Eccles., t. i. p. 523.)

Constantinople, which the son of Helen and Constantius Chlorus has just solemnly dedicated to Mary; for the master of the world, who is still held as a *god* in Rome which has remained idolatrous, belongs to Jesus Christ, and the cross by which he conquered adorns his banners, shines upon his coins, and crowns the sumptuous basilicas which he has placed under the invocation of Sancta Sophia, of the Blessed Virgin, and the twelve apostles.

Idolatry still remains erect, but it is a withered palm-tree, whose highest branches are already dead. Nothing is seen but deserted altars, with reptiles crawling over their plinths; birds begin to make their nests in the porticoes of the abandoned temples, where the spider weaves its web; the wild vine displays its broad, green leaves upon their walls of polished marble, and the traveller irreverently cuts himself a walking-stick in those sacred woods, from which a branch could not formerly be taken away under pain of death. The ceremonies of pagan worship have ceased in Greece; the most venerated idols serve no longer but to ornament the public places of Constantinople; but no one is compelled to enter the church; for although polytheism is a worship radically bad and foolish, Cæsar respects liberty of conscience, which the pagans so ill understood when they abused the terrible right of the strongest; and Lactantius, one of the brightest lights of Christendom, lays it down as a maxim, in a celebrated contemporary work, that *nihil est tam voluntarium quam religio.*[1]

With moderation like this a sacred cause must triumph.

Constantine did not confine himself to testifying his respect for Mary, by dedicating to her the new Rome; at his request, the Empress Helen, converted by him, made a journey to Palestine, and covered it with sacred monuments, of which the Blessed Virgin had her good share. The cave of the Nativity, encased with marble, and lighted with lamps of gold, was surrounded by a superb church, which bore the name of St. Mary's of Bethlehem. Saint Mary's of Nazareth, erected on the site of the humble dwelling in which the Holy Family had lived, long passed

(1) Lactantius, Institut., v. 20.

for one of the finest churches of Asia. The sepulchral cave of the valley of Josaphat was considerably enlarged, and ornamented with a superb staircase of marble; silver lamps were hung round the tomb of the Blessed Virgin. In fine, two sumptuous churches commemorated the visitation of Mary, and her swooning away near the rock from which the Nazarenes sought to cast Jesus down headlong.

The successors of the first Cæsar of Byzantium showed in general great devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Theodosius the Younger, having learned that a great concourse of Christians of Europe and Asia was seen at the tomb of the Blessed Virgin, had a superb Byzantine basilica erected there, which the Arabs called the *giasmaniah* (church of the body). Kosrou-Paviz (Chosroes II.) pulled it down at the instigation of the Jews, on his invasion of Syria and Palestine; but repenting afterwards of this act of violence, with which his Christian wife Sira with tears reproached him, the follower of Zoroaster himself built a church to the Blessed Virgin in his city of Miafarkin.[1] The Empress Pulcheria, the daughter of Theodosius, and wife of the Emperor Marcian, had three churches built for herself alone, under the invocation of *Panagia*, even within the walls of Constantinople. Not being able to enrich them with relics of the Mother of God,—as the body of Mary is in heaven,—she endeavoured to supply the deficiency by some of her garments, which the faithful of Jerusalem sent her. The fine church of Blaguerna had her robe, and that of Chalcopratum her girdle; but that of Hodegus obtained the best portion. There was placed upon an altar, resplendent with gold, and embellished with columns of jasper, a portrait of Mary sent from Antioch, which was said to have been painted by St. Luke in the lifetime of the Blessed Virgin, and to which the Mother of our Saviour had attached favours.[2]

This portrait was considered as the palladium of the empire; it was called *νικοποιων* (causing victories), and the emperors,

(1) D'Herbelot, Bibliothèque Orientale.
(2) Niceph., Hist. Eccles., lib. xiv. et xv.

among others John Zimisces and the Comneni, removed it to the army, whence it was brought back on a triumphal car, drawn by magnificent white horses. On great solemnities, this miraculous picture was taken out of the church of Hodegus, where it was kept with jealous care, and infinite precautions. The people always hailed its presence with shouts of joy, and canticles of praise. The fate of this celebrated picture has remained doubtful. Some maintain that it was the same that the doge Henry Dandolo had removed to Venice, after the taking of Constantinople by the Latins in 1204; others will have it that it was the one which the Turks found in the plunder of the city of Constantine, and which they ignominiously trampled under foot, after tearing off the gold and diamonds which formed the rich border round it.

Leo I., in 460, had a superb basilica built, which he dedicated to Our Lady of the Fountain, in gratitude for the Blessed Virgin having appeared to him on the margin of a solitary spring, to which he was leading an old blind man, when he was as yet only a young Thracian soldier, and promised him the empire. The diadem of the Cæsars had no sooner touched his brow, than he undertook to perpetuate, by this monument, the remembrance of the protection of Mary.[1]

The Emperor Zeno, son-in-law of Leo I., was no less devout to the Blessed Virgin than his father-in-law; he had a church built to her on Mount Garizim, the holy mountain of the Samaritans, and as that restless people, who were then in open revolt, had mutilated some images of Mary, he surrounded the mountain with a wall, which he furnished with a cordon of soldiers, to prevent a renewal of these sacrileges.

The Emperor Justin caused to be magnificently rebuilt at Constantinople, Our Lady of Chalcopratum, which had been thrown down by an earthquake. Two churches, built in honour of the Blessed Virgin at Jerusalem, St. Mary the New, and

(1) Niceph., lib. xv c. 25. This church, which was built with great magnificence, had glass painted, but not with historical subjects. At the end of the fifth century, painting on glass was still new.

another on Mount Olivet, a monastery built on one of the level places of Mount Sinai, and in Africa, a sumptuous basilica, named Our Lady of Carthage, attest the piety of the Emperor Justinian towards the Mother of our Lord. Not content with building temples in her honour, the Cæsars of Constantinople piously venerated Mary in their domestic chapels; they offered to her splendid crowns of gold,[1] and carried about them small images of her in massive gold.[2] The celebrated image of the Blessed Virgin *hodegetria* (conductress) was brought from the monastery of Hodegium to the imperial palace of Constantinople in the last days of Lent, and it remained there till Easter Monday: it was to this holy Virgin that Michael Paleologus, after having expelled from Constantinople the race of the Lords of Courtenay, attributed the honour of the good success of his affairs.[3]

The Greek nation joyfully followed the example of its emperors: the *Panagia* almost everywhere took the place of the household gods and Olympic idols. It was seen beneath the shade of the woods, upon the purified altar of the Oreades and the Napææ; on the banks of the waters, where the pensive Naïad lowered her urn; on the summit of promontories, where men sacrificed before to the ocean nymphs. The altars of Bacchus had been thrown down with their green garlands of ivy, and Our Lady of Grapes received the homage of the vintagers in the midst of the vineyards. Ceres herself began to be forgotten in the ruins of her mysterious sanctuary of Eleusis, destroyed by the Goths in the third century, with the temples of Delphos, Corinth, and Ephesus. Finally, Mount Athos, the mountain of Jupiter, had become, from the time of Constantine, a small colony of hermits and solitaries, of which Mary had been proclaimed the

(1) Leo IV., son of Constantine Copronymus, having carried off from the temple of St. Sophia one of those crowns of gold, which the Emperor Maurice had consecrated to the Blessed Virgin, his death, which happened very shortly after, was attributed to that sacrilege.—(Blond., lib. xxi. decad. 2.)

(2) The Emperor Andronicus II. usually wore on his neck one of these little statues of the Blessed Virgin; it was of gold, and so small that he put it into his mouth, for want of any other viaticum, at the hour of his death.

(3) Antiquités de la Chapelle, &c., du Roi de France.

Queen. The Gospel facts of her life were reproduced, in fresco on a golden ground, on the walls of an infinite number of chapels, built in her honour, in the midst of the vines and olives which clothe the sides of that lofty mountain, the shadow of which extends over the sea to the distant isle of Lemnos.

Who would have believed it? It was among those very Greeks, so devoted to the Blessed Virgin, that ideas were developed the most opposed to her personal dignity, and the perpetuity of the veneration paid to her. Constantinople beheld the heresy of Nestorius within its walls, which denied to Mary her title of Mother of God; and that of the Iconoclasts, which dragged her images in the mire, and burnt them in the public squares. Under Leo the Isaurian, who is said to have imbibed among the Jews a furious hatred against painting and statuary, as applied to objects of religious veneration, Catholics who were faithful to the traditions of the church were seen, thrown in heaps, into the Bosphorus of Thrace, or beaten to death with rods, for having lighted lamps before a domestic Madonna, prayed at the foot of the cross of our Lord, or bent the knee when passing by the image of a saint.[1] Constantine Copronymus, the successor of that wicked prince, surpassed him in cruelty, and Leo, his son, walked in the footsteps of both; but Irene, sincerely attached to Catholicism, was the means of convoking the second council of Nice, where the veneration of images was solemnly restored;[2] and the Empress Theodora, assisted by the patriarch Methodius, consolidated the pious work of Irene.

(1) Hist. Eccles. Leo the Isaurian was very cruel. Not having been able to make certain learned men who had the care of the public library share in his rage against images, he ordered them to be shut up in that library, surrounded by wood and combustibles, and set fire to it. Medals, pictures innumerable, and more than three thousand MSS., perished in that fire.

(2) The Protestants have violently declaimed against this council, which so clearly explains itself on the veneration of images. In the sixteenth century, they had a horror of the Empress Irene, whom they called *insane*, insisting that she had established the *adoration* of images.—(Lettre à l'evêque d'Angers sur les miracles de Notre Dame des Ardilliers, en 1594.)

If the insult had been grievous, the reparation was complete; the Greeks from that time sought to honour Mary by every means which they could devise. Crowns of gold were decreed to her; she was no longer represented otherwise than with a robe of purple, fillets of pearls, and the diadem of the empresses;[1] her effigy was stamped upon the coins; medals were struck in her honour, and battles fought under her auspices. "Romans," said Narses, on the point of giving battle to the Goths at Taginas, "Romans, fight bravely; the Blessed Virgin is for us; do not fail to invoke her during the fight; for she looks down upon our phalanxes, and will deliver up to us these wicked men who refuse her the title of *Mother of God*."[2] The rumour was immediately spread in the ranks that the *Panagia*, to whom Narses was very devout, had promised him victory, and fixed the hour for the attack. Persuaded that heaven favoured their cause, the Greeks displayed an energy which was no longer habitual to them. Totila was killed; his army took flight, leaving the plain covered with dead; and Italy, delivered in the name of Our Lady of Victory, loudly blessed the holy Virgin and Narses.

Nicetas has preserved to us an historical fact which proves to what extent the emperors of the Lower Empire honoured Mary:— "John Comnenus, after gaining a battle," says this historian, "would enter Constantinople in triumph, as he was entitled to do; everything, accordingly, was prepared for the ceremonial of the triumph; the streets were tapestried with silk and gold brocade, and a number of platforms were erected in the public squares, to enable people to see the pompous procession pass by, which had attracted an infinity of spectators from every province of the empire.

"The trumpets wreathed with laurels went at the head of the procession; then appeared representations of conquered cities and vanquished enemies, in painting, in sculpture, in marble, in

(1) It is in this costume that the Blessed Virgin is represented in the medals of Zimisces and Theophania.
(2) Hist. de l'Arian., par le P. Maimbourg, t. ii.

ivory of the most delicate workmanship;[1] then the spoils of enemies, arms, precious robes, vessels of gold enriched with precious stones, which enchanted the spectators; after which came the captives, who were barbarian princes of tall stature, of fierce aspect, and terrible majesty, who walked in chains, according to custom, with dejected looks, their eyes sorrowful, their heads sometimes hung down with shame, and sometimes lifted up by a movement of rage and despair.

"After them advanced the triumphal car, drawn by four white horses; people expected to see the *emperor* upon this car, clothed in a robe of purple or scarlet, ornamented with the richest embroidery, and with a crown of laurel upon his head; but they saw only the image of the Blessed Virgin, who triumphed as the cause of the victory, in place of the conqueror. The emperor on horseback, followed by his brilliant court, closed this Christian procession, happier to have made Mary triumph than to have triumphed himself."

To know how far the Blessed Virgin was revered in Asia Minor, it will suffice summarily to relate what passed at Ephesus, when the council was held which anathematised the heresy of Nestorius, in 431.

On the day when the council was to pronounce on the divine maternity of Mary, the people, uneasy and agitated, inundated the streets and thronged around the magnificent temple, which the piety of the inhabitants of the shores of the Icarian sea had built under the invocation of the Blessed Virgin. There it was that two hundred bishops examined the propositions of Nestorius, who dared not come to defend them, so little confidence had he in the justice of his cause and the validity of his arguments. The masses of people, who stood in crowded ranks on the precincts of the basilica and in the neighbouring streets, kept profound silence, and anxiety was depicted on the changeful countenances of those Greeks, whose beautiful and expressive features so well

(1) Josephus gives a magnificent description of the representations of cities which adorned the triumphs.

express the various impressions of the soul. A bishop appears; he announces to the mute and deeply affected multitude, that the anathema of the council has been fulminated against the innovator, and that the Virgin, all holy, is gloriously maintained in her august prerogative. Then, transports of joy burst forth on every side. The Ephesians, and the strangers who had flocked thither from all the cities of Asia, surrounding the fathers of the council, kissed their hands and their vestments, and burnt, in the streets through which they were to pass, odoriferous pastilles. The city was found spontaneously illuminated, and never was joy more universal. It is believed that it was in that council that St. Cyril, in concert with the holy assembly over which he presided, composed that beautiful and affecting prayer to the Mother of God, which has been adopted by the Church: "Sancta Maria, Mater Dei, ora pro nobis peccatoribus nunc et in hora mortis nostræ. Amen!"

CHAPTER V.

THE EAST. THE HOLY WARS.

The Christians of the greater Asia were no less eager than the Greeks beyond the sea to manifest their devotion to Mary. Earlier than Constantine, a church bearing the name of the Blessed Virgin arose like a pharos on the lofty promontory of Mount Carmel, the base of which is worn by the waves, and beneath which hovers the sea-swallow. Tyre, the dethroned, but still powerful queen of the Levant seas, was distinguished for her church of Our Lady, of cedar and marble, which eclipsed the Byzantine basilicas of the Cæsars. Damascus, the *emerald of the desert*, expended without regret two hundred thousand dinars of gold in building its splendid church of *Mart Miriam* (Holy Mary), which was burnt down by the Mahometans, under the caliphate

of Moctader, in the year of the Hegira 312.[1] Antioch had also a superb basilica of Our Lady, and hung up golden lamps before her picture, which it was obliged to give up to the pious covetousness of the Empress Pulcheria, and in place of which it substituted a small cedar statue of the Mother of God, miraculously discovered in the trunk of an enormous cypress, hollowed out by time, the branches of which dipped into the Orontes.[2] Libanus, that beautiful mountain which, beneath a fiery sky, as Tacitus says, is shady, and keeps faithful to the snows,[3]—Libanus, *the cedars of which the Lord planted with his own hand*, concealed within its rocky caverns a crowd of solitaries, who had devoted their labours to Mary. Seated on the banks of the river, which, from their vicinity, took the name of *Holy*, which it still bears, and which flows between two mossy banks picturesquely overshadowed, these men of labour, contemplation, and prayer, beneath the majestic shades of cedars, which shed upon them through their rich branches a light like that which descends in streams of purple, of sapphires, and gold, from the heights of the Gothic rose windows of our cathedrals, sculptured those little statues of the Blessed Virgin, called *Black Virgins*, which the pilgrims of the East, who visited the Holy Land from the earliest ages of Christianity, brought back into Europe to deposit in the chapels of the nobility, or in churches which they have rendered famous by their miracles.

Mary had sanctuaries also in the stony solitudes of Mount Sinai. At the bottom of a ravine carpeted with verdure, and so completely shut in between enormous sharp-pointed rocks, that the tops of the highest palm-trees remain always motionless, their leaves being never shaken by the slightest breath of air, there arose, in the midst of a small wood of olive-trees, poplars, and date-palms, a convent placed under the invocation of the Blessed Virgin. Nothing disturbed the melancholy silence of this oasis

(1) D'Herbelot, Biblioth. Orient.
(2) Astolfi, delle Imagini miracolose.
(3) Taciti Historiarum, lib. v.

imbedded in stone; the frightful noise of those storms which often burst forth in those elevated regions, was hardly heard there —that peaceful tomb, for the use of a few living men, was never animated but when there arose from it canticles of praise for Him *who was before the mountains*, and for Her *in whom he has done great things.*

In Persia, where the ruins of numerous churches and monasteries of the name of Mary are still to be seen, the Christians also manifested the greatest zeal in erecting these places of prayer. Eliseus Vertabed, a much esteemed Armenian author, who flourished in the fifth century, has preserved to us, in his religious history of the wars of Armenia, a discourse of the king of kings Jesgird, in the West called Isdigerdes, who bears testimony to it. "I have learned from my fathers," said this prince in a great council composed of satraps and magi, where they discussed the question of a speedy persecution of the Christians, "that in the time of the King Chabouh II. (in 319), when the religion of Christ began to be spread in Persia, and beyond in the countries of the East, our principal *mobeds* (doctors) counselled the king to abolish Christianity in his dominions; he tried to do so, but in vain; for the more efforts he made to obstruct this religion in its course, the more progress it made. The Christians of Persia were so bold, that they built in every city churches surpassing the royal palaces in magnificence; they also raised oratories over the tombs of their martyrs, and there was no place, either inhabited or desert, which they did not cover with their convents."[1]

The extinction of Christianity was resolved upon in this council, where the magi were powerful; but the king determined to employ corruption before he came to violence, and he tried first, as the Persians express it, "to pour mortal poison into the cup of milk." Calling to his *Porte* the *nakarars* or grandees of Armenia, who feudally governed small principalities hereditary in their families,

(1) Histoire du Soulevement de l'Armenie Chretienne, par Elisée Vartabed, c. iii.

under the authority of a *marzban*, or viceroy, named by Persia, he lavished upon them praises, soft words, and dazzling promises, to gain from them the sacrifice of their religion. Those who yielded obtained governments, honourable titles, fair and fertile lands, or Arabian horses superbly caparisoned. Never had there come forth from the royal treasures so many emerald bracelets; so many girdles of beaten gold, set with rubies and pearls; so many pieces of Roum brocade on gold and red ground, with flowers of precious stones. To gain the end contemplated, all was given without reckoning and without number. After all, the deserters from the true faith went over in so small a number to the camp of the magi, and the king of kings was so urged on to put an end to Christianity, that violently throwing off the mask of moderation which he had assumed, he fulminated an edict really curious; in which, after praising, after the ancient forms of the court of Persia, the holy God, "Master of the stars and of the moon," from whose power nothing escapes, "from the sun to the dark night, from the spring of water to the blue waves of the sea," he proceeded to set forth the fundamental points of his own false creed, and asperse the Christians in such manner as in reality to inspire the highest reverence for their virtues.[1] This royal edict was quickly followed by another, which enjoined the Armenians to embrace without delay the worship of fire; to contract marriages with their nearest relatives, contrary to the law of Jesus Christ, who declares that such marriages are crimes, and which

(1) "Do not trust your chiefs, whom you call Nazareans," said he to the Armenians, in that royal edict which Elisée Vartabed has preserved to us, "because they are great liars and deceivers. What they teach you by their words, they contradict by their works. To eat meat, they say, is no sin—and yet they do not eat it! To take a wife is a proper thing, and yet they will not even look at persons of the other sex! It is not committing a sin to amass riches honourably, say these men, and they cease not to preach and extol poverty. They praise misery and decry prosperity; they hold all kinds of glory in contempt; they love to clothe themselves in coarse garments like miserable men, preferring mean things to those that are precious; they praise death, and contemn life; in fine, they have gone so far as to erect chastity into a virtue, so that if their disciples hearkened to them, the end of the world would come."—(Soulevement de l'Armenie Chretienne, c. ii.)

edict ended by ordering them to sacrifice white goats and bulls to the sun.

The apostle has said, Obey the powers that rule over you: but God has commanded us to prefer death to idolatry. Thus, the Armenians, instead of conforming to the impious edict of the court of Persia, continued to celebrate divine service in the encampments of their cavalry, and to hear the preaching of the priests, who, in imitation of the ancient Levites of Israel, accompanied them to the army. In vain did Isdigerdes, separating them into small corps, disperse them among the most distant and dangerous of the frontiers; in vain did he give them for winter quarters the gorges of the most frightful mountains, or the most unhealthy districts; in vain did he endeavour to reduce their numbers by making them endure hunger and thirst; whilst on the other hand, poor Armenia, crushed like the grape beneath the wine-press, gave to the Persian tax-gatherer her last drops of gold. The tree of faith, among all these miseries, did not remain the less *verdant, like a fair cypress with the full moon shining over its head.* The Christians of Armenia had endured all; but their patience was exhausted when the king of kings madly undertook to demolish the monasteries placed under the invocation of the saints, and to turn the churches into temples for the worship of fire. They rose up from one extremity of the kingdom to the other, and enthusiasm supplying for want of numbers, all the Persian fortresses were taken, and all the temples of fire delivered up to the flames. A great battle, where the Persians were ten to one, took place on the frontiers of Georgia, on the banks of a small river which bears the slender tribute of its waters to the Gour (*Cyrus*). The Persian army presented the most splendid and imposing spectacle; its war elephants, laden with towers, from which able archers discharged their arrows of poplar-wood, extended along the wings, and in the centre stood the formidable soldiers termed the phalanx of *immortals.* These numerous squadrons, all glittering with gold, engaged in battle at the sound of cornets, trumpets, cymbals, and bells of Hindostan; the red, yellow, and violet banners waved like tulips, at the tops of the

lances; the warrior chiefs and the satraps drew from their golden scabbards their Indian swords, and urged forward their rapid Arab horses, with golden bits and glittering caparisons. Clothed in dark colours, and bearing the cross also, on their sombre standards, the Armenians, a handful of brave men, after lifting up their hands and hearts to heaven, marched against the enemy, to the chant of a canticle taken from the psalms: "Judge between us and our enemies, O Lord," sung the Christian insurgents; "take up thy bow and thy shield for our cause, which is thy own; strike terror into the innumerable squadrons of these wicked ones. Dissipate and disperse them before the august sign of the holy Cross. We are ready to die for thy truth, and if we deal death to these infidels, we shall be martyrs of the truth."[1]

Excited by this prayer, the Armenians rushed with fury upon the Persians, and broke their right wing at the first shock. The fight was terrible; the air, bristling with arrows, was like *a vulture's wing*, and the blue swords glittered like the lightning which rends the air on a day of storms. Enthusiasm, exalted by faith, carried the day; the rout of the Persians was complete; and the bodies of nine grand satraps, *known to the king*, had no other shrouds than the wild flowers of the plain, and no other tomb than the throats of wild beasts. The waters of the Lomeki were changed into blood; and one horseman alone escaped upon his dromedary, to carry to the court of Persia the tidings of this disaster.

But this victory, great and unhoped for as it was, could not prove decisive; the Christians of Armenia had neither money nor allies. Marcian, the Greek emperor, whom they had implored with joined hands, in the name of Christ and his mother, had basely sent an envoy to the court of Persia, to protest to the king of kings that he was a stranger to the insurrection of Christian Armenia, and that he would have nothing to do with it. Isdigerdes understood that Cæsar was afraid; and, trusting to his cowardice, he determined to follow up the extermination of Christianity in Armenia; but he did not succeed. The Chris-

(1) Elisée Vartabed, c. iii.

tians, overpowered by numbers, lost a great battle, where the hero who commanded was slain—Vartan, the Mamigonian, a prince of Chinese origin, who fell after prodigies of valour· Armenia, reduced to distress, would not declare herself vanquished; the cities were deserted for the forests and defiles of the mountains; the divine office was celebrated in the depths of caves; the Armenian bishops suffered martyrdom with unshaken constancy; the princes, accustomed to the sharp and fresh air of their high mountains, were transported, loaded with irons, to Korassan, where the fiery sky has for its wind the simoom, which kills like lightning,[1] and where the ground is a sea of burning sand. There they would have died of misery, had not two confessors, mutilated by the sabres of the Persians, undertaken to collect alms among the Christians of the neighbouring provinces, which they remitted to the great lords in captivity. This lasted about seven years. One of these angels of charity died of fatigue, in the burning deserts of Kohistan, the heat of which has been compared, by a modern traveller, to that of a red-hot plate of iron; the other continued alone the same work of mercy. Isdigerdes, disarmed by so much constancy, put an end at length to this hard captivity; but it was not till after fifty years of negotiations, truces, and combats, that Vahan the Mamigonian, nephew of the great Vartan, the hero of Armenia, terminated this holy war, which began in 450.[2]

If the Christian churches of Persia deserved to be compared to the palaces of its kings, of the magnificence of which the Arab poets have left us fabulous descriptions,[3] those of the people who

(1) The simoom is a deadly blast, which suffocates travellers and animals, if they do not make haste to bury their faces in the sand. Curious details on the simoom may be found in pp. 6, 7, 8 of the description by Niebuhr, edition of Copenhagen. This wind blows between the 15th of June and the 15th of August; it whistles with a loud noise, appears red and fiery, and kills people whom it meets by a sort of stifling. Its most surprising effect is, not that it causes death, but that the bodies of those who die from it are in a manner dissolved, yet without losing their form or colour, so that one would say that they were asleep. If you touch these corpses, the part touched remains in your hand.

(2) Continuation of Elisée Vartabed, by Lazare Parbe, c. iii.

(3) The description given by Antar of the palace of Cosroes resembles those

dwell between the Black Sea and the Caspian were very poor in comparison. They were at first buildings of wood, where the faithful were summoned to the divine office on festival days, by striking two flat pieces of wood together, for bells were then still unknown. The first stone church of the Armenians, built near the sources of the Tigris, was placed under the invocation of Mary. It possessed, like many sanctuaries of Syria and Asia Minor, a miraculous image of the Blessed Virgin, which had been confided to the custody of holy women.[1]

The Cathedral of Mtzkhètha, the ancient capital of Georgia, was the first Christian church of that country: the Georgians dedicated it to the Blessed Virgin. The famous *khiton*, one of the garments torn off Jesus Christ, was formerly kept there. Often pulled down, but always rebuilt with elegance in the highest style of Georgia, marble and green jasper are still seen shining there. An inscription, written in letters of gold upon one of the pillars, implies that this divine and venerable temple of Mary, *Queen of the Georgians*, Mother of God, and ever Virgin, was rebuilt at the expense and by the care of a princess of Georgia, named Pebanpato.

The metropolis of the Mingrelians was, in like manner, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin; one of her robes was venerated there, which was kept in a case of ebony inlaid with silver flowers. This robe, of precious material, the ground of nankeen colour and embroidered in bright flowers with the needle, was shown to Chardin when he passed through Mingrelia to go into Persia.

In the regions of the Caucasus, which abound in convents dedicated to Mary, it was always on lofty peaks, difficult of access, that the finest monasteries were seen: often, indeed, they were defended by strong castles. That of Miriam-Nischin, in Georgia, was built upon a rock of Caucasus, in the midst of a beautiful

of the "Mille et une Nuits;" he gives them halls of marble and red coral, fountains of rose-water, basins from which spring columns of emeralds, surmounted by birds of burnished gold, with eyes of topazes, &c.

(1) Geographie ancienne de l'Armenie, Venise, 1822.

mountain lake, which rendered it inaccessible by land; a fortress, which was considered impregnable, protected it. The castle and the monastery were besieged by Melik-Shah, in the reign of Alp-Arslan, his father, the second sultan of the race of the Seljoneides. At the moment when the army of the Mussulman prince were preparing to enter the boats to begin the assault, and when the garrison, decimated by famine, saw the approach of this assault with dejection mingled with dread, a horrible earthquake was felt, and the monastery of St. Mary fell down into the lake.[1] This singular termination was regarded as miraculous. "The Blessed Virgin," said the Georgians, "would rather see her sanctuary thrown down than defiled."

Before the principal gate of Djoulfa, an ancient and commercial city of Armenia, situated near one of the most commodious fords of the Araxes, arises a peak, on the narrow platform of which had been built, in the first ages of Christianity, a monastery in honour of the Blessed Virgin. The declivities of this steep rock, where there still flourish beautiful blue hyacinths and odoriferous tufts of marjoram, are covered with rich tombs and antique sepulchral stones—but the living, where are they?.... One day it took the fancy of an Asiatic despot[2] to erase Djoulfa, a city of forty thousand souls, from the number of cities marked on the globe, and he sent thither Thamas-Kouli Bey, with orders to have it evacuated in the space of three days. He was obeyed: the inhabitants hastily buried their riches in secret places, hoping—vain hope!—that Shah Abbas, when the hurricane of his passion should have passed over, would permit them to come and repeople their city. At the end of the third day, when they were obliged to depart, and the last moment of respite had expired, each one, taking the keys of his house, followed the priests, who took those of the churches. When they reached the foot of the rock, where the sanctuary of Mary still overlooks the ancient tombs of their ancestors, their despair broke out in heart-rending

(1) D'Herbelot, Biblioth. Orient.
(2) Shah Abbas totally depopulated the city of Djoul, in 1605.

sobs. Obliged to continue their journey, the unhappy exiles cast a last look upon their poor depopulated city, and after placing their churches and their houses under the special care of the Blessed Virgin, they threw the keys of them into the river.

The Egyptians, who had never bent the knee before strange divinities, and who seemed wedged into their beastly religion, as Flavius Josephus called it while it still flourished, so as to be unable to extricate themselves from it, had abandoned *their gods who eat grass*, and given back to the reeds of the Nile the hideous crocodiles, to which their devotees served for food,[1] in order to adore the God of Calvary. The descendants of the ancient people of the Pharaos had built very early a fine church in the little Egyptian village, whither the holy family had taken refuge to escape the impious search of Herod, and had given it the name of the Fountain of Mary; and this fountain, as well as a gigantic sycamore, which had often shaded the mother and child, was the object of numberless pilgrimages. The metropolis of Egypt was dedicated to our Lady.

The church of Alexandria, which shone among all the churches of the Christian world, like a lighthouse, casting its light to a distance, had attached to its patriarchal see, in the fourth century, a kingdom almost unknown to the Romans, about which Pliny has put forth the strangest things in the world,[2]—Abyssinia, the people of which, Jews, Sabeans, or Fetichists at pleasure, were governed by kings sprung from Makeda, the beautiful black queen who filled the city of Jerusalem with perfumes and precious stones, and who had a son by king Solomon. A young merchant of Tyre, who traded in jewels, having been shipwrecked on the African shores of the Red Sea, was first plundered, then taken

(1) Josephus against Appion, lib. ii.

(2) According to Pliny, and some other ancient geographers, Abyssinia was peopled with men who had neither noses nor mouths in their faces, and whose eyes were placed in the cavity of the stomach; men were met with who had no heads, or who had asses' heads, &c. Pliny, who relates these prodigious things,—b. vi. c. 30, and b. v. c. 8,—does not exhaust the subject, but modestly stops short, for fear, as he says, of not being believed.

to Axoum, the ancient capital of the queen of Saba, and presented as a captive of distinction to the *neguz* (emperor), that prince, *at whose name the lions bow down;* he succeeded so well that the *neguz* made him his treasurer. After the death of the sable prince, the education of his son, a minor, Abreha, was confided to the young Tyrian, who secretly instructed his pupil in his own creed, and conceived the magnificent hope of becoming the apostle of these half-savage regions. For this end, he went to Alexandria, where St. Athanasius consecrated him Bishop of Axoum. On his return, Frumentius, who was surnamed *Abba-Salama* (the father of salvation), baptized Abreha, with the principal personages of his court; a large portion of the people were not slow to follow the example of their chiefs. This religious revolution was effected, as every religious revolution should be, that is, without shedding a drop of blood. Abreha, and his brother, Atzbeha, who reigned together with edifying, good harmony, themselves preached Christianity to their subjects,[1] and built a great number of churches in honour of the true God, under the invocation of Mariam (*Mary*). One of these ancient churches, from the shady trees round about it, took the name of Mariam Chaouïtou (Our Lady the Green).

Christianity next extended over the opposite coast of the Red Sea, in Yemen, the inhabitants of which adored the stars and the trees. Among them were a good number of Jews. A prince of that nation, who had usurped the supreme power in Arabia, persecuted the Christians, and in 520 banished St. Gregentius, an Arab by birth, and archbishop of Taphar, the metropolis of this country. St. Aritas, governor of Nagran, the ancient capital of Yemen, would not apostatise from his faith: he was apprehended and conducted secretly out of the city, where he was put to death on the banks of a stream. His wife and daughter perished also in the midst of torments, with three hundred and

(1) "Hail, O Abreha and Atzbeha, who reigned simultaneously with the greatest concord, who preached with your mouths the religion of Christ to those who practised the faith of Moses, and who erected temples in his honour."—(Abyssinian Liturgy, Commemoration of the Dead.)

forty Christians.[1] And as Dunaan continued to make those suffer martyrdom who refused to deny their faith, Caleb, king of Abyssinia, in 530, made an expedition against him and conquered him. After which the *neguz*, disgusted with the throne, sent his diadem to Jerusalem,[2] abdicated the sovereignty in favour of his son, and shut himself up in a monastery, taking with him only a cup to drink out of, and a mat to lie upon. The African troops, whom he had sent to the relief of the Christians of Asia, enticed by the beauty and richness of this *happy* land, resolved to remain there. They were these black Christians, commanded by the governor of Yemen, who made that war upon the Arabs of Mecca which is known by the name of the *elephant war*. Arabia Felix, however, did not long remain in their power; the Persians conquered it about the year 590; and they were driven out of it in their turn by the lieutenants of Mahomet.

At the time of the conversion of the Abyssinians, the doctrine of Nestorius agitated the church. It is well known that the opinions of that bishop, who refused to Mary the title of Mother of God, were condemned by the council of Ephesus. The Abyssinians, in their exaggerated enthusiasm for the Blessed Virgin, were not satisfied with rejecting the heresy of Nestorius —to the title of Mother of God they added that of *Mundi Creatrix*, to testify the exalted idea which they had of Mary. Nothing, in fact, can exceed the love and respect of which she is the object on the borders of the blue Nile, and even to the Mountains of the Moon. The errors of Dioscorus and Eutyches, which the Abyssinians unhappily followed, have undergone no change in those regions.

(1) Here is a prayer addressed to the martyrs of Nagran, by the church of Abyssinia: "Saluto pulchritudinem vestram amœnam, O sidera Nagrani! gemmæ quæ illuminatis mundum. Conciliatrix sit mihi illa pulchritudo, et pacificatrix. Coram Deo judice si steterit peccatum meum, ostendite ei sanguinem quem effudistis propter pulchritudinem ejus."—(Abyssinian Liturgy.)

(2) "Hail, O Caleb! who abandoned the sign of your power, when you sent your crown as an offering to the temple of Jerusalem: you did not abuse your victory when you destroyed the army of the Sabeans."—(Abyssinian Liturgy.)

The ancient East seemed renovated by its devotion to Mary; it loved the veneration of her, and pompously solemnised her festivals, the greater part of which were of apostolic foundation. The feast of the Annunciation was considered, in the time of St. Athanasius, as he himself informs us, as one of the greatest festivals in the year; and they prepared for that of the Assumption, which was celebrated in a splendid manner, from the Nile to Caucasus, under the name of *Our Lady's Easter*, by a fast of fifteen days.[1]

Everything gave reason to expect that the gospel was about to spread from one extremity of Asia to the other, and they already began to announce to the idolatrous people of the Celestial Empire that HOLY ONE, born of a Virgin, whom the earth expected, as the disciples of Confucius said, *as the parched up plants expect the dew;* but, alas! a hurricane—more furious, more destructive, and more irresistible than the burning wind of the desert, and produced, like it, in the sandy plains of Arabia—came to overthrow Christianity with a power which, no doubt, Satan had imparted to it.

At first, a vague rumour of arms was heard along the course of the Sea of Reeds; Arab was fighting furiously against Arab, and the Fetiche trees fell at the same time with the Christian temples; then all was silence on that side, and legions of cavalry, with *abbas*, with black and white stripes, fell upon Syria like swarms of locusts, demolishing with their scimitars fourteen hundred Christian churches! Thence they fell upon Persia, which gave way and abandoned to them the famous standard of Kawed, on which depended the destinies of the empire of the Magi;[2] the flames of the superb library of Alexandria lighted

(1) The first day of the month of August was called in the Syriac calendar *saum Miriam*, the fast of our Lady, because the Oriental Christians fasted from that day till the 15th, which they called *fithr Miriam*, that is, the cessation of the fast, or the pasch of our Lady.—(D'Herbelot, Biblioth. Orient., t. i. p. 2.)

(2) The ancient Romans had bound up the destinies of their empire with those of their temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, which was burnt exactly on the appearance of Christianity; the Persians had ancient traditions, which announced

them on their stormy passage through Egypt; they soon bounded upon the African shore, where Carthage had ruled in former days, and conquered it in a very short time. Arrived at the place where antiquity had planted the pillars of Hercules, the fierce conquerors plunged their thoroughbred coursers into the Straits of Gibraltar, and cried out, as they proudly brandished the blue blades of their swords above the waves, "God of Mahomet! thou seest that there is no more land left the *true believers* to conquer."[1] Africa and Asia were compelled to bow their heads in tears beneath the brutal and savage yoke of Islamism, and the darkness of ignorance soon took possession of the splendid and glorious East.

CHAPTER VI.

THE WEST. THE MADONNAS.

Constantine, after erecting in the city of Rome—that goddess city which paganism had placed in the middle of the starry heavens[2]—the superb Lateran basilica, had shut up the pagan

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the fall of the empire of the Magi, when their celebrated standard should fall into the hands of the enemy. The empire in fact did fall at the same time with its standard, at the battle of Kadesia. This banner, originally a blacksmith's apron, which was set up in a war of independence against the tyrant Zohak, and accepted as a sign of good fortune by Feridoun, one of the greatest kings of Iran (the ancient Persia), was covered with brocade of Roum, and ornamented with a magnificent figure of the sun in precious stones; a golden globe, which represented the orb of the moon, surmounted it, and around it waved broad fringes, red, yellow, and violet coloured. This standard was called *kaweiani direfsh* (the standard of Kawed). From the time of Feridoun, the kings of Persia had made it a duty to ornament it with precious stones, and to make room for them, they had been obliged to enlarge this famous banner exceedingly, which had reached the dimensions of twenty-two feet by fifteen, when it fell into the hands of the Arabs, who tore it in pieces, and distributed it with the mass of spoils.—(Price, Muhamm. History, t. i. p. 116; and Huft Kolkoum, t. iv. p. 126.)

(1) Florian, Precis Historique sur les Maures.

(2) "Hear me, O magnificent Queen of thy universe! O Rome! admitted

temples; but he had not had a hand strong enough to eradicate the deep roots of idolatry. It is certain that the greater number of the patricians of Rome remained obstinately faithful to the idols of the empire; the senate itself was divided into two factions,—the one pagan, and the other Christian,—which made St. Ambrose say that it was like having two senates. It was of the idolatrous senators that Prudentius said: "The successors of the Catos, plunged in shameful error, still beseech the gods of Troy, and in the secret sanctuary of their domestic hearths they venerate the exiled household gods of Phrygia; the senate, —I blush to say it,—the senate honours Janus with two faces, and celebrates the feasts of Saturn."

As to the immense multitude of poor, the greater number had freely given themselves up to Christ, and despising the altars of Jupiter, they crowded round the tomb of the apostles.[1]

The Italian peninsula was divided, like its capital, between Jupiter and Jesus, Juno and Mary; the night of error struggled with all its might against the Aurora of truth. The priests of the idols attributed to the desertion of their gods the calamities which poured down upon the empire. If famine was felt in an extraordinary degree in Latium, it was because Cæsar, *ill advised* by the Christians who composed his court, had suppressed the privileges of the Vestals; if the frontiers were harassed with impunity by the barbarians, if the Goths penetrated even to the heart of the empire, it was because the altar of Victory had been overthrown. "We demand back the state of religion which so long served as a support to the republic," said Symmachus, prefect of Rome, to the Emperor Valentinian II.; "we demand peace for the gods of our country, for the indigenous gods. Our

into the starry heavens," says Rutilius, a celebrated Roman poet of the last age of Roman literature. "Thanks to thy temples, I am not far from the heavens." Rome was, in fact, a city deified, which had its priests and its temples.

(1) "All this populace, who climb up to the high stories of houses, and feed on the bread dispensed to them from rich thresholds, visit at the foot of the Vatican hill the tomb where reposes that precious hostage, the ashes of our Father St. Peter."—(Prudentius against Symmachus.)

worship has ranged the whole universe under its laws; it repulsed Hannibal from our walls, and the Gauls from the capitol. What! shall Rome reform in its old age what has so recently proved its salvation? The reform of old age is tardy and insulting." . . . .

Paganism was overcome in this struggle by St. Ambrose; but it continued no less to set itself in opposition to the *new religion*, which it loaded with sarcasms, bitter scoffs, and calumnies. It was with mad joy that Rome, under Julian, set up again the altar of Victory, which did not hinder the barbarians from extorting money for her ransom several times. Demoralised by seeing the enemy at her gates, she became again half pagan; ceremonies forbidden by the laws of Gratian and Theodosius publicly reappeared; the prefect of Rome called in the Tuscan diviners, and the last of her consuls revived by another parody the augurial ceremonies on the day of his installation. "This was too much," says Bossuet; "God at length remembered the many cruel decrees of the senate against the faithful, and at the same time the furious cries with which the people of Rome, thirsting after Christian blood, had so often made the amphitheatre resound: he delivered up to the barbarians that city, drunk with the blood of martyrs. . . . . That new Babylon, who imitated the old,—like her, inflated with her victories, triumphing in her riches, defiled with her idolatries, and the persecutor of the people of God,—falls, too, like her with a great fall; the glory of her conquests, which she attributed to her gods, is snatched away from her; she is a prey to barbarians; taken three or four times, pillaged, sacked, destroyed; the sword of the barbarians pardons none but the Christians. Another Rome, entirely Christian, arises from the ashes of the first; and it is only after the inundation of the barbarians that the victory of Jesus Christ over the gods of Rome, which are not only destroyed but forgotten, is fully achieved."

Idolatry being completely dead, her marble temples were reopened; they were purified, and the finest were dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, before whom all Italy bent the knee with a fervour and faith which, thanks be to God, endure still. The

patricians vied with each other in building churches or chapels, and adorned them with a profusion which proved their piety; the altars of Mary were inlaid with silver, gold, and precious stones;[1] lamps equally rich lighted them; nothing was spared to make the splendour and religious decoration correspond with the dignity of the holy Personage.

The people, who had no gold at their disposal, rendered her a homage more affecting, more intimate, and picturesque. On the smiling hills of Baiæ, in the fertile fields of Campania, in the deep gorges of the Apennines, in the glaciers of the Alps, and among the sterile heaths of the Abruzzi, were seen to arise, here and there, humble altars to the Madonna. Those little primitive chapels, covered with a network of ivy, or a green lace of vine-leaves, humbly hid themselves beneath the old green boughs of forests, and their shadows at noon-day extended over the courses of streamlets. This devotion, so fresh, so original, so well harmonising with the gentle mind and simple habits of Her who is the object of it, still subsists in our days with its religious poetry. Victorious over time and political commotions, the Madonna still shelters her little mysterious lamp beneath a canopy of foliage or jessamine. Every evening the mountain shepherd, the labourer of the valley, and even—shall I say it?—the bandit, devoutly rekindle the flickering flame which shines like a protecting star on the heights of the mountains, and which appears like a beacon in the midst of the woods. The corner of the earth which surrounds it is holy land; in that place, the fiercest brigand of Calabria would not dare to draw his poniard, and he prays there, when the distant bells slowly sound the *Ave Maria;* it is the last link which binds him to humanity, and rarely is that link broken.[2]

(1) The frontals of some of the altars of Venice were of solid gold: the frontal of the altar of the Blessed Virgin, of Sancta Sophia, of Constantinople, was a composition of precious stones and of gold, which had been cast into the crucible together.

(2) The respect paid to the Madonna by the Italian banditti is well known; one of them allowed himself to be taken without making any resistance, because

These little solitary chapels, lost in the midst of rocks, or among woods, revive in the soul of the traveller who has the least sense of religion, a thousand delicious sensations, like the long-forgotten scent of some flower of our native country, which comes unexpectedly upon us in a foreign land. A modern author, who does not pride himself on Catholicism, but the contrary, describes in a charming way the emotions which he felt at the sight of one of those Madonnas, concealed in the mountains of the Tyrol. "At a turn of the mountain," says he, "I found a small niche hollowed out in the rock with its Madonna and lamp, which the devotion of the mountaineers keeps up and rekindles every evening in the most retired solitudes. There was at the foot of the rustic altar a nosegay of garden flowers, fresh gathered. This lamp still burning, these flowers of the valley still quite fresh, several miles within the barren and uninhabited mountain, were the offerings of a religious homage more original and affecting than anything that I had seen of this kind. Two paces from the Madonna was a precipice, by the side of which one must walk to get out of the defile; the lamp of the Virgin must have been very useful to travellers by night."

During the revolution of 1793, when the French came to take possession of the kingdom of Naples, the rumour was spread that they were going to shut up the churches, and *abolish the religious veneration of the Blessed Virgin.* When they heard this, the peasants of Calabria took up their long guns; all the steeples of this mountainous region sounded the tocsin, and the banditti themselves, wearing the image of the Madonna hung by a red riband, enrolled themselves among the regular troops, and fought like lions. These Calabrian bands were the last to lay down their arms.[1]

From Italy the veneration of the Mother of our Saviour passed beneath the rougher and bluer sky of Gaul. The gods

the *sbirri* attacked him on a Saturday, on which day he had vowed before the altar of the Blessed Virgin never to employ arms, even in defence of his life.—(See P. de Barry.)

(1) Italy, by Lady Morgan, vol. iii. c. 24; Travels in Italy, by M. R. C.

of Olympus had penetrated there in the train of the victorious cohorts of Cæsar, and the temples of Augustus and Jupiter arose by the side of the *dolmens*, the *menhirs*, and the less ancient altars of Belenus. The idols of the emperors, servilely accepted by the Gallo-Roman population of the great cities, were not long in disappearing after the conversion of Constantine; but it required centuries to destroy the worship of the trees, stones, and fountains of materialised Druidism.[1] In vain did the active virtues, the bland sweetness, the angelic abstinence of the anchorets captivate the admiration of the Gallic tribes; in vain did the ingenious charity, the spotless integrity, the mild and compassionate religion of the bishops, attract their souls to the crucified God by a holy and powerful magic: the sight of the gigantic *menhirs*, which arose like dark phantoms in the midst of barren wastes, the aspect of an oak covered with moss, or of a deified fountain, destroyed in a few moments the slow work of the Christian pastors.

In this state of things, so well able to discourage the most tried patience, the Gallic clergy showed themselves worthy of the religious and civilized mission which they had received from their divine Master. They were naturally charitable and humble of heart; necessity rendered them ingenious. Unable to break through superstitious habits, which were closely bound to the deep roots of the old Celtic trunk, they sanctified what they could not abolish, and made even the practices of idolatry turn to the glory of God. The *menhirs* of the desert heaths, where the children of Teutates often went to pray by the silvery light of the beautiful star which they called *the fair silent one*,[2] were surmounted by a cross of granite which cast a Christian thought over the rites of idolatry. The oaks, eight hundred years old, where the Druids had cut down with their golden sickles the *bough of the spectres*,[3] received in their hollow trunks the sweet image of Mary; and it was again Mary and the saints whom

(1) See Hist. Eccles. de Bret., Introduction.
(2) Bensozia, *ben, bel, sos*, silent.—(Hist. Eccles. de Bret , t. iv. p. 496.)
(3) Legni, Hist. Eccl. de Bret., t. iv. p. 5[illegible]4.

the barbarians found on the margin of their fountains of the *fairies*.[1]

This substitution, which proclaims in those who made it so perfect a knowledge of the human heart, took place, not only in Gaul, but among the Belgians, Spaniards, and Britons. Everywhere it was crowned with success. In course of time the mysterious traditions of Druidism descended from the hymns of the bards to become popular tales; the daisies of the meadows, the lily of the valley in the forests, the odoriferous shoots of the honeysuckle, were no longer plucked over the waters in honour of the deified fountain,—they were deposited on the rustic altar of Mary; and the little lamp of her chapel took place of the torches of resinous wood, which the Gauls used to light around those old oaks, which they then called *the oaks of the Lord.*

On the invasion of the barbarians, the Christians, anxious to secure the revered objects of their veneration from the profanation of these furious people, carefully concealed the little statues of the Blessed Virgin in places the most retired and inaccessible of their forests. These holy images remained there; not that they were forgotten, but because the sword of the Goths, the Huns, and the Vandals, mowed down the people like the mower cuts down the grass of the meadows; and because, in the most fertile and populous countries of the Roman world, the traveller then made a journey of many days without seeing the smoke of a cottage.[2]

Long afterwards, some of these Madonnas of the fountains and groves reappeared with distinction; and according to the old Belgian and French chroniclers, miracles accompanied their discovery. Sometimes a bright light attracted a Spanish hunter in the night, or a shepherd in the Pyrenees, towards a bush, where the birds sung melodiously all day long: there was an

(1) Hist. Eccles. de Bret., t. iv. p. 561, et t. i. p. 293.

(2) The general depopulation which followed the invasion of the barbarians exceeds all belief. Muratori relates, that in the eighth and ninth centuries, Italy was so bare of inhabitants that it was infested with wolves.—(Murat., Antiq., t. ii. p. 163.)

image of Mary hidden among the flowers of a thorny shrub, and embalmed by the sweet breeze of the woods. Sometimes the shepherds, seeing their sheep bend their knees before a hillock covered with short grass, and thick sown with white violets, dug into the earth, where they found, to their unspeakable surprise, a small statue of wood, rudely carved, but in perfect preservation, representing the Blessed Virgin. Another time, falling stars, streaking the night with a long track of brightness, and all descending to the same place, like fire-flies on the wing, pointed out to the Spanish troops encamped under the towers of some Moorish city the place where, in the time of Roderick, holy religious men had stealthily hidden, on some night of flight and alarm, a miraculous image, to protect it from the profanations of Mussulmanism. And then there were dauntless knights and illustrious princesses, who riding on horseback with the falcon on their hand, through the green forests of France or Portugal, discovered in the hollow of some old oak white with lichen, or in the crevice of a rock which the brambles prevented their approaching, a small refugee Madonna.[1] At the sight of it, the haughty baron, the noble dame, made the sign of the cross with an humble and devout air, hastily dismounted from their palfreys, knelt down on the grass before the Madonna, and vowed to build a chapel for her.

Our Lady of the Blossomed Thorns was found upon a bushy rock, in marvellous circumstances. This is how it is related by a simple legend of past times:—" Not far from the highest point of Mount Jura, but a little on the descent on its western side, was still observable, half a century ago, a mass of ruins, which had belonged to the monastery of Our Lady of the Blossomed Thorns, built by the widow of a knight, the last of his race, who died at the conquest of the tomb of our Lord. The noble lady, walking one winter's evening in the long avenue of her

(1) Malfada, Queen of Portugal, when hunting with a falcon, found a small Madonna, which retained the name of Our Lady of the Forest.—(See Vasconcellius, In descriptione regni Lusit., c. vii. 1, 5.)

ancient castle, with her mind occupied with pious meditations, came up to a thorny thicket, which afterwards indicated the site of the monastery, and was not a little surprised to see that one of the bushes had already put on its clothing of spring. A calm and pure brightness, like that which comes from the break of day, showed her the thorns in blossom, and beneath this canopy of verdure, embroidered with little white stars with pink rays, was a statue of the Blessed Virgin, carved very plainly of coarse wood, set off with colours to the life by an inartistic pencil, and clothed with robes which showed but little finery. It was from this that the miraculous brightness proceeded which lighted up the place. The holy image was piously transferred with great pomp to the chapel of the strong castle; but the next day it was not to be found. The Queen of Angels had preferred the modest shade of her favourite thicket to the richness of the baronial chapel; she had returned to the midst of the coolness of the woods to enjoy the peace of solitude, and the sweet odours of the flowers. All the inmates of the castle repaired thither in the evening, and found her there, shining more brightly than on the evening before. They fell on their knees in respectful silence. 'Powerful Lady,' said the baroness, 'blessed, holy Mary, this is the dwelling that you prefer; your will shall be done.' And shortly afterwards a fine Gothic abbey arose on the same spot where the miraculous Madonna had been found. The nobles of the kingdom enriched it with their gifts, and kings endowed it with a tabernacle of pure gold."

Britanny abounded in oaks consecrated to the veneration of Mary; the most celebrated displayed its branches on the shore of the ocean, on an isolated hill, which rises at some distance from Lesneven. There was venerated Our Lady of the Gates, whose statue of massive silver was from time immemorial an object of profound veneration to the devout Armoricans. The sanctuary is now widowed of its Madonna, which the *incorruptible* agents of the republic stole away; but it is not the less frequented by a crowd of pilgrims, with long hair, wide trowsers, and garments of goats' skin, who come to ask of the Mother of God fine

weather, abundant harvests, or the health of some sick relative. To see them in this primitive costume, of earlier date than the Roman conquest, devoutly kneeling in the shade of the woods, in sight of the ocean, which strikes against their granite rocks with its green waves, and of the *dolmens* of the ancient heroes, who marched to the conquest of the Capitol, you would imagine yourself transported to the *Gallia comata* of Pliny, and the illusion would be irresistible if they intoned a hymn to the Blessed Virgin in the antique and sonorous idiom of the Celts—their own peculiar language.

Berry had also its celebrated Madonna of the Oak, which a certain lord of Bouchet, when looking for his hawk in the midst of the woods, had found in the hollow of one of those aged trees which the Gauls held sacred, upon which the bird of the chase had perched, as if on purpose to entice his master to it. The oak, which diffused its soft shade over the graceful little figure of Mary, around which the ivy entwined itself like a gothic frame, crowned a small island of short, close grass, surrounded by the beautiful sheet of clear water of a small lake, which had been named, I know not why, the *Red Sea*. This oak became the object of so many pilgrimages, that after an embankment had been made for a road to it, it was surrounded by a religious edifice. The image, adorned no doubt over richly by the piety of the inhabitants of Berry, was stolen during the civil wars by the Protestants; but the Count de Maur had another made of the wood of the oak which had so long sheltered it, and which might have said, like the perfumed earth of the Persian poet, "I am not the rose, but I have lived near it."[1]

In Picardy a small Madonna was deposited in the hollow of an old oak, on the road which led from Abbeville to Hesdin. This miraculous image, over which the honeysuckle let fall its sweet-scented festoons, like a veil of flowers, overlooked an oasis of verdure, which bordered upon the barrenness of the road exposed to the sun, and offered a delicious resting-place to the

(1) Saadi, Gulistan.

traveller on foot, and the pilgrim of high birth who went barefoot, like the King St. Louis and the Sire de Joinville, to some holy place, in consequence of a vow made for himself or some person dear to him. The bandit of the feudal times himself muttered an *Ave*, taking off his hood of coarse cloth, before Our Lady of Faith; and the baroness, after praying at the feet of the Madonna, opened her alms-box, ornamented with her arms inlaid in gold, and dropped from her delicate white hand a little shower of silver into the trunk of the aged oak, where the evangelical modesty of the faithful of the middle ages secretly deposited for the poor the alms which they took thence without shame, and which no one would take away but themselves.[1] The traveller, when he had said his prayers, sat down, with his feet stretched out upon the soft, fresh grass, which revived him after his long journey; he inhaled the perfume of the flowers, listened to the bubbling of the neighbouring spring, and deeply enjoyed the contrast between his past fatigue and present repose. But he must depart: how unfortunate! the shade was so grateful, the turf so soft, the murmuring of the fountain, which seemed to suppress its voice so as not to overpower the low sound of the prayer which was softly put up to Mary, was so charming! He made the sign of the cross, he whispered a parting prayer to the Blessed Virgin, he slipped an alms into the hand of the infirm old man kneeling on the bank, whose blessing followed him on his way: "Good traveller, may Our Lady preserve you from all accidents!" And he turned his head back at the bend of the road, to take a last look at Our Lady's Oak.

Anjou, where pilgrimages to Mary are of so ancient date, had near the town of Sablé its oak, contemporary with the Plantagenets, adorned with its Madonna, no less ancient.

At the foot of the Vosges, on the frontiers of Lorraine, an enormous Gallic oak, which the peasants still call by old custom

(1) Those trees in which travellers deposited their alms, which the poor might come and take in the evening, unobserved, were so reverenced, says M. de Marchangy, that none but a poor person would have dared to take a farthing from them.

the tree of the fairies, held in its bosom, softly carpeted with moss, a mysterious white image of the Blessed Virgin, before which Jane d'Arc, the holy maiden, devoutly went to pray, and that with all her heart, against the English, whom she was soon to see flying before her standard. Hainault had also its ancient oaks with miraculous images; neither were Spain and Portugal without them; England, in the reign of Charles I., still beheld her children invoking on their knees the absent Madonna, and Evelyn informs us that they gave these trees the name of *procession oaks.*[1]

But of all the monuments of the vegetable kingdom, which have been consecrated to Mary, there is none which for beauty can contend with the oak of Allonville, in the district of Caux. The circumference of this ancient child of earth is thirty-four feet above its roots, and twenty-six at a man's height. It imitates the broad and spreading top of the cedar, and its vast branches, which spring from the trunk at eight feet from the base, spread out horizontally, so as to cover a great extent of ground. The interior of the tree is hollow throughout, the middle having been destroyed for several centuries; it is only by its bark and by the interior layers of sap, that it still keeps alive; yet it is covered every year with acorns, and clothed with thick foliage. There has been formed, in the hollow of this oak,—which is at least nine hundred years old, and which has seen the fall of the druidical forests,—a charming little chapel, cased with marble, the altar of which is adorned with the image of Mary. A grating encloses this sanctuary, without concealing the holy image from the sight of the pilgrim and the traveller. Above the chapel is a cell, a fit habitation for some new *Stylite*, to which a staircase leads which winds round the trunk. This aerial dwelling, covered with a pointed roof, forms a steeple surmounted by an iron cross, which rises in a picturesque manner above the branches of the oak.[2]

(1) In the reign of Charles II. there were still found in several counties in England ancient oaks, which were commonly called *procession oaks.*—(Mém. d'Evelyn.)

(2) See the Antiquités Normandes of Ducatel.

On certain feasts in the year, and especially the patron feast, the chapel serves for the ceremonies of the service, and the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages repair in crowds to the feet of the Gallic Virgin, who seems maternally to enfold them in her cool mantle of verdure. These good people love their Madonna, and have given good proof of their love. At that disastrous period when everything connected with religious worship was proscribed, and when the least manifestation of Catholicism was punished with death, a troop of revolutionary men from Rouen marched in order of battle towards Allonville, with the intention of burning down the centenary oak, with the Virgin whom it sheltered. The peasants of Normandy, though far less susceptible of enthusiasm than the Bretons, assembled in arms beneath the oak, and so bravely repulsed the republicans, that they were thoroughly ashamed of the failure of their attempt. At the height of the Reign of Terror, when pious canticles had ceased in every part of the territory of France, when a people, led astray, adoring Marat upon the altar of Christ,[1] cried out, "*There are no more saints, no God, no immortal soul!*" there was seen set up amidst the knotty branches of the oak of Allonville the iron cross of the hermitage, and there was still to be read in front of her chapel the calm and affecting inscription: "To Our Lady of Peace."

Under the successors of Constantine the Great, Gaul, where paganism was losing ground every day, had become almost entirely Christian. In the time of Theodosius it contained seventeen metropolitan sees, dedicated for the most part to Mary, and a hundred and fifteen bishoprics, governed by bishops of great learning, rare piety, charity unbounded, and illustrious birth, which added to their influence. Christianity was then labouring to win to holy and austere morals those Gallic people, passionately fond of the games of the circus, chariot races, and the

(1) "It was in the feasts of Reason," says Laharpe, "that the bust of Marat was placed upon the altar, and those who were suspected of fanaticism, that is, of believing in God, were compelled to bend the knee before Marat."—(See Du Fanatisme dans la langue révolutionnaire, p. 51.)

seductive pleasures of the theatre—enervating and pernicious enjoyments which pagan and corrupt Rome cast, as a stroke of policy, like chains of flowers, over those primitive people, whom she had found it difficult to conquer, in order to weaken their courage. The bishops, who are too lightly accused of having made a compromise with paganism, because they were unable to eradicate those evil pagan roots, used every means, on the contrary, to extirpate them, and flattered themselves that they should succeed, when all at once, in the midst of profound peace, and while Gaul lived from hand to mouth, without any forecast for the morrow, confiding in her legions encamped in her great cities, and the sixty fortresses which protected her frontiers against the barbarians, behold the trumpets of war are heard on the banks of the river which separates her from Germany. . . . . Thick hostile battalions at once rush down precipitately upon the plains, the echoes of which yet feebly repeated the last burdens of the Gallic songs; sword and fire devour the face of the country; the rivers dyed with blood, the cities given up to pillage, the circuses demolished, the marble temples of the ancient deities of the empire thrown down, the Christian churches profaned, announce the irresistible approach of those savage warriors of the north, whose gods bore the significant titles of depopulators and fathers of carnage; they pour down upon Gaul like the avalanche which breaks away from the side of the mountains. The warrior has no time to grasp his arms; dismay takes away the very thought of flight; misery and opulence experience the like fortune. . . . . A thick and dark veil—like to that which the tempest spreads along the horizon at sea, when the waves, foaming and filled with sea-weeds, furiously break against the reefs—covers the fair Roman province, and leaves nothing to be seen but the colour of blood and the glitter of arms; from the Rhine to the Pyrenees, from the Mediterranean to the ocean, Gaul, hitherto so flourishing, is no longer anything but one vast theatre of desolation and carnage. This disastrous period, which saw the Roman colossus fall, and changed the form of Western Europe, was the gulf in which ancient civilization was entirely

swallowed up; and Robertson, the great English historian, does not hesitate to say, that if he was called upon to determine the most deplorable period in the history of the world, he should unhesitatingly name that which extended from the death of Theodosius the Great to the establishment of the Lombards in Italy.

THIRD EPOCH: THE MIDDLE AGES.

CHAPTER VII.

TIMES OF THE BARBARIANS.

The invasion of the barbarians was to religion, as well as to those nations who lived softened and civilized under the Roman eagles, an epoch of mourning, and terror, and weeping, a night of blood, lighted by the distant glare of incendiary fires, resounding with the clashing of armour, and traversed by warrior chiefs, who assumed the fearful title of the Scourges of God. When the noise of this great transit of men had ceased, and something might be distinguished through the smoke of conflagrations, and the dust of battle-fields, it was seen that the face of Europe was changed. The Saxons occupied fertile England, the Franks had taken possession of Gaul, the Goths of Spain, and the Lombards of Italy. There remained no longer the smallest vestige of the sciences, arts, and institutions, civil and political, of the powerful people of Romulus,—barbarism had carried away all, and swept off all before her. Everywhere new forms of government were observed, new laws, new customs; one thing alone had resisted the general transformation—Christianity, which was to console the vanquished and humanise the conquerors.

The veneration of Mary, weakened for a time by Arianism, which fatally prevailed after the invasion of the Goths and

Vandals, flourished again under the victorious banners of the Franks. Clovis, who was the only Catholic king of his time, conceived the design of building, under the invocation of Our Lady, at the eastern extremity of the city, a metropolitan church, of which he laid the first stone, and which his son Childebert completed.[1] This church, built on the site of a temple of the Druids, was ornamented with pillars of marble, with frescoes on golden ground, and with a mosaic pavement. The poet bishop Fortunatus boasts above all of the stained-glass windows, which gave great light inside: these stained-glass windows were a luxury imported from Greece and Rome, which was only just introduced into Gaul.[2]

Clovis I. had also Our Lady of Argenteuil built, where the Princess Theodrade, daughter of the Emperor Charlemagne, took the veil, after accompanying her father into Italy; this abbey, which was then in the midst of woods, was ruined by the Normans, and magnificently rebuilt by the pious Queen Adelaide, wife of Hugh Capet, who took delight in adorning its altars with beautiful works of her own hands.

The other Merovingian princes, not excepting Chilperic, the cruel husband of Fredegondes, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin a number of chapels and abbeys. Radegundes, daughter of Berthaire, King of Thuringia, the holy and deserted wife of King Clotaire, begged with tears, on her death-bed, to be interred in the unfinished Church of St. Mary, which he was then building at Poictiers. This same pious princess, who refused to resume the queenly crown, which her fierce and fickle husband offered her again, founded in Neustria, near a Druidical spring which the Gauls in her time persisted in secretly worshipping, the

(1) Falibian, Hist. de Paris, t. i.

(2) The oldest author who speaks of painted glass is St. Jerom, in his commentary on Ezechiel, quoted by Ducange, *verbo Vitræ*. After St. Jerom, it is Gregory of Tours, and next Fortunatus. Paul the Silent, a contemporary writer with Fortunatus, to whom we owe a very detailed description of the Church of Sancta Sophia, as it then was, has also given a description of the beautiful windows of coloured glass which adorned the dome of the Byzantine basilic.—(See the Hist. de Byzance, by Ducange.)

Church of Our Lady of Caillouville, which was decorated with so many holy pictures that it was actually compared to paradise. Of the Merovingian church nothing now remains; but the fountain still pours forth its beneficent waters, and people come from a great distance to recover their health there. When the water is calm and still, there may still be seen on the pavement of the fountain the figure of St. Radegundes, with this inscription: "PRAY FOR US."

Another wife of Clotaire I., Queen Waltrade, and a daughter of the same king, the Princess Engeltrude, founded at Tours, about the year 600, a fine abbey with the title of Our Lady of the *Escrignol* (jewel-box), probably because those princesses employed their jewels about it.[1] Several daughters of high birth shut themselves up with them in this monastery, which was destroyed by the Normans.

St. Gregory of Tours informs us that there was in the capital of Touraine a church of Our Lady, the sanctity of which was awful. On solemn occasions, they used to swear with one hand laid upon the altar of the Blessed Virgin, and those who perjured themselves were considered sure to die in the course of the year.[2]

The royal consort of Clovis II., Bathildes, that fair and saintly princess who was the pearl of those barbarous times, founded the superb Abbey of Chelles, whither she retired when her glorious regency was at an end. This abbey, situated in the middle of the dense forest where Chilperic had met his death, was placed under the invocation of the Blessed Virgin. A great lady of the Merovingian court, Lutrudes, the wife of Ebroin, that celebrated mayor of the palace, who has been surnamed the Marius of the Franks, because he put on the mask of popular politics in order to attain to absolute power, founded, after the death of her dread spouse, the splendid Abbey of Our Lady of Soissons, which was inaugurated by St. Dronsin. Six Carlovingian princesses uninterruptedly governed this abbey for a

(1) Gallia Christiana, t. iv.
(2) Gregory of Tours, de Gl. M. c. 19.

hundred and forty-five years. At that time Our Lady of Soissons was considered the flower of the nunneries in the empire of the Franks, and the daughters of the highest families took the veil there. The resort to it became such, that it was necessary to confine it within bounds; at the petition of the Abbess Imma, Charles the Bald fixed the number of the religious at two hundred and sixteen. This prince also ordered that there should be established, in front of the gate of the abbey, an inn for travellers, and an almonry. Everything breathed piety in this opulent house; the office was never interrupted, and they watched whole nights before the blessed Sacrament. When the king was with the army, or his life was in any danger, the number of nuns who spent the night in prayer before the altar of Our Lady was greater. According to the custom of the feudal times, this monastery was bound to send to the army its contingent of soldiers. Its importance declined with that of the empire of the Franks; but two relics of Our Lady attracted thither a great concourse of pilgrims from all countries throughout the middle ages. Now, the only remains of this Merovingian cloister are a few ruined arches.

An Austrasian princess, Plectrudes, wife of Pepin of Heristal, built also, under the first race, the Church of Our Lady of Cologne, which still remains.

But of all the pious foundations in honour of the Blessed Virgin, which are of these remote times, there is no one that recalls a more dramatic fact than that of Our Lady of Treves, in the ancient country of Tongres, the country of the Franks, which then formed part of the duchy of Austrasia. Who does not remember the popular legend of Geneviève of Brabant? that legend which was told by so many troubadours and minstrels in the guard-rooms of the great barons of the feudal times, and which the cottagers have held fast in their black chimney corners for a thousand years and more, ever singing in their long evenings the Gothic plaint which charmed the court of Charlemagne? The fact is, that this history of the barbarous ages, attested by a monument, recalls the memory of an affair which was really tragical. Siegfried, Count Palatine of Treves, tears himself

violently away from the arms of his beloved wife, to go and fight against the Moors under the glorious standard of Charles Martel. Golo, the first servant of the prince's palace, that is, one of his principal lords, to whose care he had confided his young spouse, a mirror of virtue and a pearl of beauty, conceived an audacious passion for the holy and charming princess, which he declared to her in a very insolent manner. Repulsed with that contempt which his treachery deserved, the worthless favourite, who had coolly intended to dishonour a man who loved him, did not scruple basely to calumniate the woman whom he could not corrupt; for all base acts are closely connected together. Siegfried believed him; he was at a distance; he ardently loved his wife; he was jealous. In the first impulse of indignation which he deemed lawful, he condemned Geneviève to die with her infant; but the servants who had been charged with the execution of this afflicting sentence, in the depth of a dark forest, had not the heart to do it, and the Belgian princess hid herself in this wood, full of wild beasts, with her new-born infant, which was suckled by a fawn. For six years the innocent and calumniated wife lived upon roots and wild fruit, incessantly beseeching God with tears that her innocence might come to light. The merciful Virgin, moved at so many tears and so much misery, appeared to her one day by the side of a spring, and promised her that her prayer should be granted. Shortly after, Siegfried, who still loved his wife, and whom nothing could console for the loss of her, when hunting, found her again at the bottom of a cave, covered with poor rags, and having no other veil than her long hair. Golo confessed his infamous conduct, and was torn in pieces by four wild oxen of the Black Forest. When this act of severe justice was over, Geneviève had a church built in honour of Mary in the midst of the woods, where she had wandered so long, and on the very spot where the Mother of God had appeared to her. Hydolph, Archbishop of Treves, consecrated this church in the year 746.[1]

(1) Add. ad Molan. de Belgie.

Notwithstanding these marks of respect paid to the Blessed Virgin, it would be historically false to represent the veneration of her as having attained its highest point under the first race of our kings; this veneration was then only as it were in its aurora. Local devotions absorbed the attention of the great and of the people: St. Martin of Tours, St. Denis, St. Germanus, St. Hilary, were objects of veneration so exclusive, that excepting our Blessed Lord, all was cast into the shade. The altars of these saints were plated with gold; their tombs were covered with plates of silver; beneath the vaulted ceilings of their Romanesque churches were suspended, as votive offerings, mantles of gold tissue and embroidered with pearls.[1] The white image of Mary, the large figures of the apostles, the army of martyrs, were effaced before the primitive bishops of Gaul. Thus an impostor named Didier, who aimed at forming a sect in the sixth century, gave himself out, with quite original effrontery, as *greater* than the apostles, and *almost as great* as St. Martin.[2] This mode of viewing things, which to us is somewhat surprising, proceeded from the gradual extinction of light; it was because legendary histories had gained upon the Gospel, and ignorance, which has always been an evil, did not always stop at the threshold of the Christian temple; it was because the successors of the Basils, the Ambroses, the Chrysostoms, deserved what Alfred the Great said with melancholy discouragement: "From the Thames to the Humber, they no longer understand the *Pater noster*, and in the rest of the island it is still worse."[3]

Gaul was not entirely converted to the Gospel under the Merovingian kings; the Franks had completely abjured their savage German divinities, but there still remained some vestiges of polytheism among the Romans of the cities, who continued to draw auguries from the flight or the chant of birds; to keep Thursday a feast in honour of Jupiter; to swear by Neptune,

(1) See Vie de Dagobert, by the Monk of St. Denis.
(2) Gregory of Tours.
(3) Robertson's History of the Emperor Charles V, vol. i. p. 186.

Pluto, Diana, or the genii; in fine, who dared to light up lamps in the temples abandoned by the idols, and hang up offerings in them, as St. Eligius reproaches them in his Homilies. These feeble offshoots of Greek and Roman idolatry soon withered of themselves on a soil which would no longer nourish them; but the worship of the Celts, as we have already said, resisted the priestly axe with all its might, and took ages to die out entirely. In the fourth century we still see the image of the *cultivated earth* carried in procession in the fields; in the fifth, a canon of the second council of Arles declares that, "if any noble proprietor shall allow a torch to be lighted before trees, fountains, or stones, he shall be cut off from the communion of the faithful, after having been first admonished and solemnly warned." At the end of the sixth century, the council of Auxerre forbids performing vows to thickets, trees, or fountains.[1] In a council of Nantes, the date of which is fixed by Flodoard at the year 658, bishops are recommended to have the trees rooted up, to which the people of Britanny persist in paying a superstitious worship, and for which they have so much veneration that they dare not cut off a branch from them. The priest Paulinus represents these same Gauls as again become Fetichists, serving up meats upon the sacred stones which were found at the foot of these trees, and beseeching an aged oak—which served perhaps for a burial-place for some old Druid chief hidden under its bark, with the humble funereal oblation of a handful of beech-nuts[2]—to take under its protection their wives, their children, their servants, and houses.[3] The *Capitularia* of Charlemagne again decree severe penalties against these superstitions, which had

(1) This canon is expressed in these terms: "Non licet inter sentes, aut ad arbores sarcivos, vel ad fontes vota exsolvere."

(2) After removing the bark of the oak, they cut a square opening in it, where they inserted the corpse of the Druid: they closed it up with a piece of green wood, over which they replaced the bark. The tree, thus become a tomb, still continued alive. These trees have been found, where the bones, almost reduced to dust, were accompanied with walnuts, or beech-nuts in good preservation.

(3) Paul., lib. i. Paschalis Operis, c. 2.

survived the dynasty of Meroveus,[1] which proves that they deserved the trouble of being considered in the first years of the ninth century. It was especially in the two Armoricas, the Eastern and Western, where the gospel, late sown, grew but slowly, that the indigenous worship, favoured by forests as old as the world, maintained its ground in defiance of councils and bishops, who, nevertheless, used every effort for its extirpation. The desert of Scycy, in the peninsula of Cotentin, was still peopled, in the seventh century, with idolatrous Gauls, who lived there, as the canons of certain councils of the time say, positively *like wild beasts*. But if idolatry, supported by prophets, bards, and certain wandering Druids in the woods, was obstinate, Christian zeal had the necessary ardour to defeat it, and gave proof of it. In the depths of these solitudes—lost, reputed the asylum of devils, where strange things were seen, when the resinous torches of the Gauls, who repaired by night to some forbidden ceremony, gave a red glare beneath the foliage of the huge oaks, or formed sheets of flame around black *dolmens* erected on the heath in the silvery light of the moon[2]—hermits, very often men of high birth, came to settle in poor hovels of turf covered with reeds, which were soon surrounded with ivy mixed with moss. Dry leaves, sometimes even the bark of trees, was their bed; fruits, berries, wild roots were their food; a garment of coarse wool, white and plain, such as the Roman plebeians wore, was their clothing.[3] Making themselves a passage through the

(1) Capitul., Caroli Magni, lib. i. tit. 64.

(2) The most august assemblies of the Druids were those of the new and full moons; that of the new moon began when this planet shone enough to light the country round about, that is, on the sixth day; but the moonlight did not prevent them from carrying torches.—(See Hist. Eccles. de Brét., Introduct., p. 184.)

(3) Down to the sixth century, the clergy wore the white and close toga of the Roman people. Pope Celestin, in the year 428, blamed the ecclesiastics of Vienne and Narbonne, who, instead of the toga, began to wear a mantle and girdle. He shows them that it is only the love of chastity that is commanded to us by what the gospel says of girding the loins; that they must not corrupt by superstition the discipline which so many holy bishops have authorised; and that the clergy ought not to be distinguished from the faithful by their dress,

tall ferns of these virgin forests, the secret paths of which were unknown to them, these good pastors went everywhere in search of the wandering sheep, whom they wished to induce to enter into the fold of Jesus Christ. When the good odour of the sanctity of one of these solitaries came to be diffused, like the sweet and penetrating scent of the lily of the valley, through the aged Neustrian forests, other anchorets made haste to place themselves under its discipline. Then they broke up the dry and hard earth, which had been for ages obstructed by the heather and the bramble; then the ears of corn began to whiten on the sides of the uncultivated hills; then in the evening, at the hour when the birds warble in the trees, the hymns of Sedulius in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary arose in slow and grave melody, in the very places where the victim doomed to die by the stony knife of the *ovate*, to appease the gods of Gaul, had uttered his death-song.[1]

The women, that sex, at the same time timid and intrepid, who experience every fear and face every danger, were anxious to contribute their share to the fall of paganism, and came like flights of white turtle-doves to humble themselves in the shades of woods still idolatrous, under the protection of Mary. St. Fremond, a great lord, tired of the world,—whom the episcopal mitre went in search of beneath the straw thatch of an anchoret's cell, and who regretted his cell at Ham, when in the palace of the

but by learning and purity of life.—(Fleury, Mœurs des Chrétiens, ch. 41; ibid., t. ii. p. 185.)

(1) M. Pitre-Chevalier, in his interesting and patriotic work on Britanny, has inserted a very curious bardic hymn attributed to the victim upon the *dolmen*; this hymn has been preserved by M. de la Villemarqué:—"Hu! O thou whose wings rend the air; thou whose son was the protector of great privileges, the bardic herald, the minister. O Father of the abyss! My tongue shall sing my death-song in the midst of the circle of stones which incloses the world. Support of Britanny! Hu, whose forehead is radiant, support me! It is the feast around the two lakes; one lake surrounds me and surrounds the circle; the circle surrounds another circle of deep posts. A fair retreat is in front; great rocks cover it; the serpent comes forth gliding on towards the vessels of the sacrificator with golden horns. The golden horns in his hand, his hand upon the knife, the knife upon my head."

bishops of Cotentin,—built, in his solitude so much regretted, a monastery of nuns, which is one of the first of which the memory has been preserved in Neustrian Armorica; he joined to it a very fine church, which he dedicated to the Mother of God. This monastery, built about the year 674, was destroyed by the Norman idolaters, and splendidly rebuilt by their descendants the Norman Christians.

The vicinity of the Isle of Britain, which the Anglo-Saxons, conquerors of the native people, had replunged into idolatry, was fatal to the Neustrian pastors; for the idolaters of Great Britain, making common cause with those of Gaul, fortified them in their resistance. The gospel, favoured by a Merovingian princess, had penetrated afresh into the British Isle, towards the end of the sixth century, and was established there, thanks to the wise measures of St. Gregory the Great; but this disputed triumph was as yet only partial. Edwin, one of the most powerful princes of the Saxon heptarchy, had the glory of firmly establishing it. Having, like Clovis, made a vow to embrace Christianity, if he should gain a victory over the perfidious kings of Wessex, who wanted to have him assassinated, and having gained it, he convoked the *Wittena-gemote*, that is, the great council of the sages, lords, and warriors of his small kingdom, and after laying before them his motives for abjuring his old deities, he requested their opinion.

This Anglo-Saxon senate, deliberating on the change of religion which was proposed to them, was both a strange and imposing spectacle. The king, young, handsome, and brave, presided over the assembly, with the crown on his head, a naked sword in his hand, according to the custom of the time, and clad in a long mantle, fastened with a clasp upon his shoulder; on each side of him were the wise men of the nation, old men unarmed, with long robes and mantles, wearing a cap of Phrygian form; then the warrior chiefs, with short and tight clothing, whose round helmets without visors were ornamented with a falling feather; on their arms shone heavy bracelets of gold; to a narrow belt, which passed over the shoulder, hung their battle-

axe and their sword; with one hand they held a lance, and with the other a round buckler, studded with golden nails; at the farther end were the Christian priests, and the high priest of the idols.

The result of this conference exceeded the expectation of the bishops. The high priest of the pagan divinities was the first to declare that they were powerless. A warrior proprietor, a *thane*, compared the life of man to the flight of a little bird that crosses a saloon with a single movement of his wings. "You see the door by which he enters," said the Saxon chief, "the window through which he passes out; but whence does he come? and whither does he go? This is the emblem of our existence. If the new faith clears up this uncertainty, we ought to adopt it."[1]

Upon this, the king declared himself a Christian; the whole assembly solemnly renounced the worship of idols, and the people imitated the senate and the prince. This religious revolution took place in 620.

The German divinities were vanquished in Great Britain, but Druidism was not; it survived in the old insular forests, where the English still tattooed themselves, like the savages of America, in the heart of the eighth century, though councils had declared that this strange fashion, which had procured for the Scotch and North Britons the name of Picts, or painted warriors, was an invention of the devil.[2] King Edgar forbade, by a decree dated in 967, the superstitious assemblies called *Frithgear*, held round druidical stones, which were still worshipped in Northumberland, Cumberland, Yorkshire, Devonshire, and especially on Salisbury Plain,[3] the Carnac field of the English, where was the celebrated Stonehenge (the *chorea giganteum* of the ancients). This decree seems not to have been scrupulously obeyed, since Canute or Cnut the Great, a celebrated sea-king, was obliged to forbid, as late as the eleventh century, the worship of stones, fountains, and

(1) Hist. d'Anglet., by M. de Roujoux, t. i.
(2) This tattooing was condemned in 787 by a council of Northumbria, as a pagan impiety and a diabolical rite.—(See Concil. Labbe, t. vi.)
(3) See Camden's Britannia.

trees. As to the Anglo-Saxons, they became entirely converted, without any trace remaining of their former worship; and no sooner had they substituted the cross of our Lord upon their banners for the white horse of Hengist, than they vied with each other, in all parts of England, in erecting convents, cathedrals, churches, hermitages, and chapels in honour of Blessed Mary, sometimes alone, sometimes associated with one of the apostles or Saxon saints, when they possessed them. Nothing was more plain and simple than most of these primitive Anglo-Saxon chapels. Enormous trunks of trees, taken from the neighbouring forests, and cemented with moss or turf mixed with clay, formed the outward walls; the walls of the interior, which was entered by a low porch, decorated with some lozenge-shaped mouldings, were plastered with a clayey kind of earth, which admitted of a sort of polish, and upon which were traced coloured figures of barbarous design.[1] At the extremity of the little edifice, where the wind, rain, and light came in together through the lattice of osier work which served for windows,[2] was raised upon an altar in the shape of a tomb, and covered with a red cloth with long fringe,[3] an image of the Blessed Virgin in the costume of a Saxon lady. An open belfry, where hung a bell turned green, surmounted the thatched roof of the chapel, all bedecked with tufts of growing grass. In front of this primitive monument was seen a cross, formed of two trees fastened together with branches of willow, and crowned with a garland of box or ivy; this was the sign of the change of worship, and the trophy of Christ over Zernebock and Hertha. A little later, the Anglo-Saxon bishops procured from Rome painters, glaziers, and builders; but the

(1) Hist. d'Anglet., by M. de Roujoux, t. i.

(2) Sir James Hall Douglas, in his Essay on Gothic architecture, traces the stone mullions, so light and elegant, of the great ogee windows, to the imitation of those lattices of wicker work mentioned in the earliest Christian legends of England.—(See the Edinburgh Philosophical Transactions.)

(3) It must be remembered that the ancient altars of Christianity were the tombs of the martyrs; the draperies, often very rich, which covered the old altars were red, to imitate the colour of blood; people went sometimes to Rome for veils from the tomb of St. Peter and St. Paul.—(Hist. Eccles. de Bret.)

cathedrals and abbeys which they built under the invocation of Mary and the saints partook of the massive and ungraceful style which prevailed at this period of little progress.[1]

When William of Normandy had conquered England, the Anglo-Norman churches, with their bold spires, their splendid belfries, and their towers carried up to the clouds, were introduced in all the pride of their fairy architecture, by the side of the heavy churches and poor rude chapels of the Saxons. But these latter, notwithstanding their want of elegance, retained a powerful charm which operated strongly upon the conquered multitude: it was in them that the vanquished came to pray and to weep. The Blessed Virgin, whom they had venerated there in better days, the Virgin, who, according to the custom of the time, wore their national costume, seemed to them more attentive, more indulgent, more disposed to succour them in those religious enclosures, where she reigned over the tombs of their forefathers and the saints of old England.

Christianity, which was carried into Spain by St. James, four years after the death of our Lord, according to the ancient Spanish tradition, and which made rapid progress there, flourished in that country, mingled with the tares of Arianism, from the time of the invasion of the Goths and Vandals. The veneration of Mary, somewhat eclipsed, however, by that of St. Vincent, the great martyr of Cæsar-Augusta, now Saragossa, whom Prudentius has celebrated in his hymns, truly antique in their form and grandeur, was already popular in that country. Our Lady *del Pilar*, which was at first only a poor chapel of loose stones and sods, had already become a Romanesque church, the object of pious pilgrimages, where the statue of the Blessed Virgin seemed to smile upon the Spanish people on their knees, from the summit of its rich column of marble. Our Lady of Toledo, the metropolitan church of all Spain, the foundation of which is carried back by

(1) "Misit legatarios in Galliam, qui vitri factores, artifices videlicet Britanniis ea tenus incognitos, ad cancellandos ecclesiæ porticus et cœnaculorum ejus fenestras, abducerent."—(Bede, lib. de Wiremuthensi monasterio, c. 5.)

some Spanish historians to the first ages of the Church, had been authentically consecrated in the year 630, by the Gothic King Reccared, the first king of Spain who merited the title of Catholic, because he drove the Arians out of his kingdom, after having procured the condemnation of their errors by a council held at Toledo. But the sanctuary of Mary, most visited by the people of Spain, in those remote times of which we are attempting to sketch the history, was that of our Lady of Covadonga, in the Asturias. It was because, beneath the natural vaulted roof of this Asturian grotto,—consecrated to Mary by the ancient anchorets, when they combated Druidism in the depths of the Spanish forests, where it maintained its ground a long time,[1]—the banner of independence, the sacred banner of the cross, had taken refuge as in its last asylum after the battle of Xeres, which delivered up Spain to the Caliphs. Abandoning forest after forest, mountain after mountain, and retreating with heroic slowness to Mount Antiba, where is descried the sea of the Cantabri, the farthest limit of Spain, Pelayo, the sole hope of his country, took refuge for a short time, with a handful of brave men, in this inaccessible cavern, which the piety of the Asturian mountaineers had consecrated to the Blessed Virgin, and which was adorned by her sweet image, placed upon a rock, which served for an altar. When he made his way into this rude temple, the Spanish hero conceived some hope, and kneeling with his companions at the foot of the revered image, he solemnly placed himself and the desperate affairs of Spain under the protection of *Nuestra Señora de Covadonga*, adopted the name of the Virgin for his war cry, and fortified himself in the mountain which she protected. The Mother of God graciously accepted the vows of the Gothic prince, and was pleased to manifest her protection by procuring for the Spaniards a great victory over the Moors, commanded by the Mussulman governor, Alcama.[2]

(1) The twelfth and sixteenth councils of Toledo, one of which was held in the year 681, and the other in 693, show, by their eleventh and twelfth canons, that those who pay a religious worship to stones or trees, sacrifice to Satan.

(2) According to F. Mariana, this army consisted of sixty thousand men;

Attributing to the Blessed Virgin this unhoped for victory, Pelayo, to testify his gratitude, caused to be built, near the natural cavern—which extended far into the side of a steep rock, at the foot of which the Auseba flowed—a church, under the title of Our Lady of *Covadonga* (the cavern), where all Spain came to pray.[1]

The descendants of Clovis *the Fair, the Long-haired*, as he is called in the prologue of the Salic law, had greatly degenerated from the bravery and abilities of this prince. The lamp of the Merovingians, almost extinct, was going out without showing the smallest spark; the indolent kings, who were no better than vain idols, hardly ever showed themselves to the people more than once a year, and then a on chariot adorned with green boughs and flowers, drawn by four oxen, who drew to the Champ de Mai those phantoms of princes whom the breath of Charles Martel could have dispersed, and did not condescend to do it. Still they were pious, and built monasteries; but piety alone is not sufficient to support a sceptre; that of France, which is heavy, requires a firm arm, a fearless heart, a strong head, and a wise mind. The mayors of the palace had all these, happily for Christian Europe, which soon saw itself embroiled with Islamism.[2]

The Moors, masters of Spain, from the heights of the Pyrenees, had cast a covetous eye upon France, the fairest kingdom of the West; it seemed good to them to introduce Islamism there, and to change the churches into mosques. This project was no sooner conceived than executed. The rich plains of the south were soon covered with a numerous army, who plundered the sanctuaries on its way, and threw down the statues of the Blessed Virgin and the saints from their ancient pedestals, con-

Sebastian, Bishop of Salamanca, and Ambrosio de Morales, make it still greater.

(1) The church of Our Lady of Covadonga remained till 1775, when it fell a prey to the flames; the pious King Charles III. wished to rebuild it magnificently, and had works commenced for that purpose, which are not yet finished. This sanctuary is situated in the province of Oviedo.

(2) The word *islamism* signifies consecration to God.

temptuously treating them as idols. From the Pyrenees to the Rhine, all France trembled; the churches were too small to contain the people on their knees begging of God and his holy Mother aid and succour against the infidels; the bishops took up arms; the mitred abbots marched to battle beneath the banners of their abbeys; the abbot of St. Denis had the *oriflamme* borne on high, which was as yet only the banner of his own convent; Aquitaine displayed the figure of St. Martial, and Charles Martel the mantle of St. Martin of Tours, which was then the royal standard of France. It was in truth a holy war; and accordingly we see that those who fell in this warfare were ranked among the martyrs.

The battle where the Moorish scimitar and the battle-axe of the Franks were to decide the destiny of the world, and secure the triumph of the Gospel or of the Koran, took place in the plain of Poictiers. The two armies viewed each other at first with equal surprise; the French could not help admiring that brilliant Oriental cavalry, proud of so many triumphs, and laden with the spoils of Africa and Asia. The earth trembled under the hot tramp of those Arab coursers who pawed up the ground, and seemed to say, "Come on!" like their type immortalised in the sublime description of Job; the eye was dazzled with the splendour of the flowing garments of the Saracens, the fabulous richness of their turbans, and the flashes from their cuirasses and scimitars.

The army of the Franks, which was drawn up in form of a wedge for the battle, presented to the children of Ismael a spectacle no less new and imposing. Those swift warriors, clad in short clothes, who surpassed the fleetest horses in celerity; that formidable infantry, which combined in its manœuvres the ancient tactics of the Roman legions with the ferocity of the Germans, and whose triangular mass, bristling with battle-axes and swords, was advancing with impetuosity, but with a steady, uniform movement, to break through the Moorish squadrons, struck the Arabs with surprise, who soon perceived, say the ancient chroniclers, that they had not to engage with degenerate

Goths, and that Charles was more difficult to conquer than Don Roderick.

The battle of Xeres, which had given over Spain to the Moors, had lasted eight whole days; the battle of Tours, which delivered France from them, lasted only the length of a day's sun. The Arabs charged the army of Charles several times, throwing their battalions into the medley like waves on the sea; but their disorderly fury fell in vain upon the formidable masses of the Franks, who are compared by a Portuguese, the Bishop Isidore, a contemporary author, "to a wall of ice, against which the clouds of the Arabs came to break and dissolve," without leaving any trace behind them. At length, the ferocious Abderrahman, lieutenant of the caliph of Bagdad, whose authority extended even to Spain, fell beneath the ponderous axe of Charles. The shades of night separated the combatants, and the next day, when the Christian troops rushed upon the African camp to complete the ruin of their enemies, they found it empty—the Moors had fled! and each victorious battalion was received in its own city, now secure, with the joyful sound of bells and the chanting of psalms, and on all sides were heard repeated those words of the Salic law, "Hail to Christ, who cherishes the Franks, protects their armies, and holds their kingdom under his protection."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MEN OF THE NORTH.

THE last of the Merovingians had exchanged the white and blue dalmatic, the golden diadem set with precious stones, and the golden staff six feet in length, curved like a crosier, which formed the sceptre of the long-haired kings, for the brown habit of the monasteries; it was one phantom the less. For a long time the mayors of the palace were the real kings, and the dis-

appearance of the last descendant of Clovis made so little noise in the world, that the chronicles of the time are content to say, with a conciseness where contempt seems to peep out beneath indifference, that the Franks assembled at Soissons, deposed Childeric, and gave the crown to Pepin. This prince of Austrasia, who had just boldly set upon his brow the crown of France, violating in concert with the lords every law of the monarchy, had a sword able to defend it, and a head strong enough to bear it. His valour could not be called in question, his prudence was proverbial, and he showed more piety than his father Charles Martel, of glorious memory, who had extensively pillaged the church after saving it. Pepin, who was distinguished for his devotion to the Blessed Virgin, was crowned by Boniface, Archbishop of Mentz, in the celebrated abbey church of Our Lady of Soissons, where Gisella, one of his daughters, the beloved sister of Charlemagne, took the veil. It was this prince who gave to the Merovingian monastery of Our Lady of Argenteuil part of the immense forest which was contiguous to it. Pepin the Short also founded in the ancient German forest, which afterwards became so celebrated and dreaded under the name of the Black Forest, a charming chapel in a thicket in honour of Mary. It was on the following occasion. One day, when he was hunting the stag in these vast woods with his lords, he became separated from his train without perceiving it; having lost his way, and not knowing what direction to follow, he was hesitating to take a certain path, when the faint sound of the bell of a hermitage reached him, borne on the autumnal breeze. The Frank prince turned his horse's head in the direction whence the religious summons had come, and soon perceived in a wild, but charming situation, where a spring of fresh water bubbled up, a small forest chapel, built, or rather roughly put together, by a poor Scottish monk. This modest edifice, constructed without the compass of the architect and the trowel of the mason, had not the less magnificence in its own way; the bramble had interwoven in the narrow openings its brown ringlets ornamented with broad dark green leaves, while the gold and purple foliage of

the wild vine seemed to fix upon the loose enclosure the rich tints of the setting sun.

The kings of that time, naturally proud enough, divested themselves, however, of their haughty habits before any Christian emblem. When he discovered the black cross of the hermitage, the descendant of the conqueror of the Moors bent his head, and bowed down as the humblest shepherd of his kingdom might have done; then, tying his horse to a tree, he made his way into the poor sanctuary placed under the invocation of Mary. The complete nakedness of the sacred place—through the roof of which, that had fallen in, the pines were seen waving and the clouds moving—did not in any way cool the genuine piety of the brave king. After having respectfully prayed before a Madonna badly carved,—which in these days would make a child cry, and put an artist in a rage,—the prince, taken unawares, and unwilling to depart from the holy place without leaving there some token of his visit, laid at the foot of the altar his cap, embroidered with gold and ornamented with precious stones. When he returned to his hereditary palace of Heristal, Pepin did not forget, amidst the cares and festivities of royalty, the little hermitage of Mary, which he rebuilt magnificently, and suitably endowed.[1]

Charlemagne, or *Charles the Great*, as the chronicles of the Franks inform us, did not repudiate the religious inheritance of his father's piety; the remembrance of one of his pious visits to Our Lady *du Marillais*, in Anjou, has been preserved, a pilgrimage which dates, as it is affirmed, from the fourth century, and which was then one of the most frequented in the Christian world.[2] During his abode in Italy, his rich gifts to St. Mary Major quite dazzled the people of Rome, though their eyes were used to splendour and magnificence. Germany was enriched by him with three churches with the title of Our Lady: yet this was not all.

After exhuming the city of Granus, famous for its baths, the remains of which he had accidentally discovered extended beneath

(1) Astolfi, Delle Imagini miracolose.
(2) Grandet, Hist. Eccles d'Anjou.

the moss and brambles of the beautiful valley bordered by the Rhine and the Meuse, Charles, who would make choice of it for the seat of the empire of the Franks, had built there, adjoining his vast palace, under the invocation of the Blessed Virgin, a chapel or oratory, of an octagonal form, the marbles of which he brought from Italy, and which he lighted with stained-glass windows cased in gold, and enclosed with gates of brass. This chapel, which was equal in extent to the basilicas, and which later on afforded a magnificent asylum to the mortal remains of the great emperor, soon became so celebrated, that the German city, which chiefly owed its glory to it, accounted itself honoured to bear its name. From the time of the Emperor Louis I. to the year 1556, thirty-six kings and ten queens were crowned in the sanctuary of Our Lady. This sanctuary was so frequented, that in 1496 there were reckoned, in one single day, a hundred and forty-two thousand pilgrims.

The court of Charlemagne imitated him in his tender and profound piety towards the Blessed Virgin. When he declared war against the Mussulman King of Cordova, and summoned all the counts of the south of France under the glorious banner which bore the figure of the archangel Michael, the hero of the French of this time, the celebrated knight-errant Roland, his nephew, before he crossed the Pyrenees, which were to be so fatal to him, made, with a number of high and mighty lords, a pilgrimage to Our Lady of *Roc Amadour.* The Carlovingian prince, after piously invoking Mary, offered her a donative of silver of the weight of his *bracmar* (sword), and consecrated to her that sword which had gained so great renown. As he was returning to France, covered with glory, the rear-guard of the French army, which he commanded, was surrounded and attacked on every side in the valley of Roncevaux. In vain did the French meet an inevitable danger with undaunted courage; they were cut to pieces: none would surrender; all perished, commanders and soldiers. To perpetuate the memory of this disastrous event, there was erected in this place, over the bones of these warriors of fabulous bravery, a chapel, dedicated to Mary, in which was

placed an inscription bearing the names of Thierry, D'Ardennes, Rioles du Mas, Guy de Bourgogne, Ogier the Dane, Oliver, and Roland. This chapel, situated near the Abbey of Roncevaux, was decorated with frescoes representing a combat, and during ten centuries none but Frenchmen were interred there. The last thought of the knight-errant Roland, on the field of battle, where he expired under the arrows of treachery, was an act of respect towards the Blessed Virgin; he would have his sword carried to Our Lady of Roc Amadour, and it was done according to his orders.

Louis the Pious, or the Meek, the son of Charlemagne, always carried about him the image of Mary, in the chase and on his journeys. When it happened, that separated awhile from his court, he found himself alone in the woods, he quickly took off his gauntlets, studded with gold, and taking from his bosom the venerated image, he would place it at the foot of an oak, and there make his prayer. He deposited it afterwards in the superb Abbey of Hildesheim, which he caused to be built in honour of the Blessed Virgin,[1] and where he planted with his own hand a rose-tree, which remained almost as long as his beautiful monastery.

Under Charles the Big, a lazy and deceitful monarch, whose sad and disturbed reign prepared the way for the fall of the race of Charlemagne, the Normans, under the command of Sigefried, came and laid siege to Paris. This ancient capital of the *Parisii*, where Julian the Apostate was fond of residing, was not then of greater extent than in the time of Cæsar: the Cathedral of Notre Dame, built by King Childebert on the east, two great towers on the south and north, and the palace of the king or the nobles on the west, formed the four extremities of its enclosure. The Seine surrounded it with its blue waters. The bank of the river, on the north, was covered with a forest, and the octagonal tower which was at the corner of the cemetery of the Innocents, served as a watch-tower in this forest of sufficiently evil repute, against robbers. On the site of the quarter des Halles, and in

(1) Triple Cour., n. 75.

the environs of St. Opportuna, was an hermitage which was called the Hermitage of Our Lady of the Woods, because it was at the entrance of the forest. The mount of St. Geneviève was covered with vineyards; and the faubourg St. Germain, famed for its meadows bordered with willows, was a small abbey village.

Sigefried had at first requested permission for the troops to pass through Paris which he was to march into Burgundy; the Parisians refused to open their gates for him, and the Norman swore by the bracelets of Thor that his sword should force them open.

Eudes, son of Robert the Strong, shut himself up in Paris, and resolved to defend it against these barbarians, who, not satisfied with pillaging houses and churches, even stole away the venerated bodies of the saints.[1] The siege was long and murderous; seven hundred Norman barks blocked up the Seine; on both sides were employed, in the attack and defence, battering-rams, *balistæ*, and *catapultæ;* they cast at each other fire and burning darts. The Norman towers were opposed to the besieged ramparts, and the enemy approached the walls under covered galleries, which the Parisians often succeeded in setting on fire, or demolishing beneath the weight of beams and stones.

From the beginning of this heroic and hopeless contest, Paris had been placed under the special protection of the Blessed Virgin. The clergy carried her statue in procession round the ramparts during the battle, and the Normans often aimed at it without effect; the archers invoked Mary aloud, while they discharged clouds of arrows and stones from the tops of the towers; in her honour, as often as they had repulsed the pirates of the north, the city was magnificently illuminated with flambeaux of white wax. "It is she who saves us," said Abbo; "it is she who deigns to support us; it is by her aid that we still enjoy life. Amiable Mother of our Saviour,—brilliant Queen of heaven,—it is you who have been pleased to snatch the people of Lutetia from the threatening sword of the Danes!"

(1) See Antiq. de Rouen, p. 102.

Some years later, the Blessed Virgin miraculously aided the recovery of the city of Nantes from the Normans, and their expulsion from Britanny, which they had seized upon. Alain, who was afterwards surnamed *Barbe-Torte* (twisted-beard), having taken refuge in England, with the flower of the young nobility of Britanny, undertook to reconquer his country. He was twenty years old, he was in exile, and possessed little else than his sword and the protection of Mary; but a sword is something in the hand of a brave man, and the protection of the Blessed Virgin is equal to many squadrons. He landed with a few Bretons at Cancale, and march after march, leaving behind him a long train of Norman corpses, the Breton hero arrived at length under the walls of Nantes, where the northern pirates had taken refuge as in their last asylum. Repulsed with loss by the Normans, who had collected a number of troops round the city, Alain, pursued even to the extremity of the mountain with his troops, stretched himself out upon the ground, quite exhausted, says an old Breton chronicler, and suffering wonderful thirst. "He began then to weep bitterly, and by humble prayers to beseech the aid of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of our Lord, begging of her to open for him a spring of water, with which himself and his horsemen, having quenched their thirst, might recover their strength. Which prayers being heard by the Virgin Mary, she caused a fountain to spring up for him, which is still called St. Mary's Fountain, with which he and his men, being sufficiently refreshed and revived, recovered their strength, and returned valiantly to battle. They assaulted the Normans, killed them, and cut them off, excepting those who fled, carrying with them their booty on board their vessels."

Alain found the city of Nantes sacked and burnt. All covered with dust and blood, the youthful liberator had long looked out in the miserable city—where nothing was left but fragments of walls blackened by the flames—for the majestic basilica of St. Felix, the roof of which, covered with fine tin from Cornouailles, was so bright, says a contemporary monk, that in the rays of the sun, or in the moonlight, it looked like polished

silver. Alas! this roof had disappeared, and the sky served for a dome to the antique church, where the altars were broken, and the tombs laid open. To reach the place where the altar had been, Alain was obliged to make himself a way by beating down the brambles with his sword. The *Te Deum* for the victory, and hymns of praise to the Blessed Virgin, were sung, nevertheless, amidst the ruins of this temple, with religious fervour; and before he rose up, the young Breton duke, grateful for the guardian aid of the Blessed Virgin, promised to dedicate this cathedral to her, which took the name of Our Lady of Nantes.

It was under the reign of Charles the Simple that was effected, at the expense of the finest gem in the crown of the Frank kings, the conversion of a whole army of those fierce and audacious pirates of the north, who had so long desolated the coasts of the west of Europe. Neustria, which they had been devastating for almost a century, and which they had even turned to the rude worship of their gods, with the Danish sword at their throats,[1] was ceded to them with the rights of lords paramount over Britanny, on condition that Rollo, their chief, who had marked his way through terrified France with torrents of flames and blood, should become a Christian. The condition was accepted; the Norman pirate espoused a Carlovingian princess, who lived but a short time, and he was converted without any falling back. The religious element, strangely enough, prevailed among these pirates of the north, who had more than once sent presents and wax tapers to abbeys which they had come expressly to plunder, when a tempest at sea, which had arisen in sight of the coast where they wanted to land, had led them to believe that the Christian sanctuary was defended by a heavenly and powerful protector.[2]

(1) For seventy-four years, says Ronault, the Cotentine had the misery to be profaned by the ceremonies which were used to the idols of the North, and the sacrifices, which were offered to them in the town of Contances.—(Abregé de la Vie des Evêques de Contances, p. 151.)

(2) A Danish army, which had landed on the coasts of Britanny, to pillage the rich and celebrated Abbey of Rhedon, was so terrified at a storm which burst over their camp, that instead of plundering and burning the abbey, the pirates, judging it to be defended by a God worthy of their respect, brought presents

The first question addressed by the new duke of Normandy to Franco, Archbishop of Rouen, who instructed him in the mysteries of Christianity, was who were the most renowned saints of France and Neustria. The prelate at once named Our Blessed Lady, and expatiated on her power. "Well then," said the northern prince, after a moment's reflection, "we must do something for her, as she is so powerful." And he made on the spot an ample grant of land to Our Lady of Bayeux. The city of Rouen had dedicated to Mary its metropolitan church, burnt by the Normans of Hastings, and repaired very indifferently some time after; the duke was baptized there with the greater part of his Danish captains, and began works for its enlargement and embellishment, which his successors continued with magnificence.[1] Our Lady of Evreux, one of the oldest churches of Normandy—if we believe the chronicles which record that St. Taurinus, the first bishop of Evreux, founded it about the year 250, and consecrated it to the worship of the true God, under the invocation of the Blessed Virgin Mary—received immediately rich presents from Rollo, who, up to the hour of his death, gave proofs of the most sincere piety towards *Madam Saint Mary*, as the princes and great ones of that time were accustomed respectfully to style her.

Those Norman dukes, naturally generous and valiant, were in general very devout to the Blessed Virgin; it was at her altar that they received the investiture of that fine duchy, which they proudly called *their kingdom of Normandy.* It was beneath the grey pavement of her chapel, hung with *fine tapestry of silk and gold*, representing the principal facts of the history of the Mother

thither, lighted it up with tapers, and placed sentinels all round it to prevent pillage. Sixteen soldiers, having infringed the orders of Godfrey, their commander, and having carried off something from the abbey, were punished with death the same day.—(Mabillon, in Actis SS. Ordinis S. Bened., sect. iv. 2nd part.)

(1) This prince was interred in the Cathedral of Notre Dame, which he was then rebuilding. "He ended his days like a good Catholic," says Taillepied, "and was buried with great pomp and funeral solemnity in the great church of Notre Dame, on the south side."—(Antiquités de la ville de Rouen, p. 107.)

of God, and worked by the duchesses of Normandy,[1] that they came to sleep their last sleep. Robert the Magnificent built, by himself, three churches of the name of Mary: Our Lady of the Deliverer, to fulfil a vow made during a tempest, which assailed his vessel in the dangerous waters of the islands of the Norman archipelago; Our Lady of Grace, near Honfleur; and, finally, Our Lady of Mercy, below the ducal castle which defended Harfleur.

This prince, so devoted to Mary, would go and visit her tomb, and that of CHRIST at Jerusalem; he set out on horseback, accompanied by the richest and most stately lords of his court, all covered with gold, glittering with precious stones, and surrounded by a crowd of attendants, squires, and pages, as if they were going to a tournament. On the roads the people crowded to see them; their entry into Rome was quite an event. The Romans beheld with admiration and astonishment these northern barbarians, who had caused terror even as far as Italy, and who reminded them of the features and stature of the heroes of antiquity. Seeing their good looks, their bright coats of mail, the long Danish swords, with golden hilts, which they had by their side, and their pointed helmets, from beneath which appeared their light hair, they asked one another who were these princes of the north, who came to visit, as poor pilgrims, the city of the apostles. The pope gave them a distinguished reception, gave them his blessing, and with his own hands laid the pilgrim's staff on the shoulder of their leader and lord. Thence they proceeded on their way to Constantinople, the city of Mary, which they dazzled with their magnificence. They scattered pearls and gold as they passed along; Robert's mule was shod with gold, and

(1) "The Duchess Gonnor, second wife of Richard Sans-Peur, Duke of Normandy, gave great possessions to the churches," says Taillepied, "and especially to Our Lady of Rouen, where she gave beautiful vestments which she made, together with the embroiderers and workmen; she also made tapestry of all kinds of silks, and embroideries worked with beautiful histories and figures of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints, to ornament the Church of Our Lady of Rouen."—(Antiquités de la ville de Rouen, p. 112.)

when a shoe fell off, a Norman would not condescend to stoop to pick it up; it was for the Greeks to stoop down and pick up out of the dust the golden nails which the Norman's horse had lost.[1]

When they drew near to the holy places, the Christian spirit was felt; these same travellers, who had traversed, or braved, with heads erect, and without acknowledging any one's right to levy toll upon them, so many rivers well defended, and so many walls with battlements, these bold companions, who always let the end of a sword be seen beneath the pilgrim's garb, hitherto proud even to insolence, could not have been recognised, so humble, modest, and devout had they become at the near approach to that holy land, the rocky and burning soil of which they trod barefoot. Robert, so justly named the Magnificent, visited, with the most edifying piety, the two holy sepulchres of Jesus Christ and the Blessed Virgin. Christians and Mussulmans received from him alms so royal, that the emir of Jerusalem, as a point of honour, refused in his turn to accept the tribute due to him from these splendid pilgrims. Robert must have left a considerable present at the holy sepulchre; Richard II., Duke of Normandy, had already made a gift to it of a hundred pounds' weight of gold.

When the pilgrimage was accomplished, the duke returned by land on the way to his fine duchy, which he was never more to behold! He died at Nice, in Bithynia, joking at the approach of death, like his ancestors, *the sea-kings*,[2] and recommending himself to *Madam Saint Mary*, as his Christian predecessors had done.

The Norman nobility, who began to dream of kingdoms beneath the bright sun of Italy, were no less devoted to the Blessed Virgin than their valiant princes. Neither distance nor

(1) See La Normandie, by M. Jules Janin, c. 2.

(2) A Norman pilgrim having met the duke, who was carried by the Arabs in a litter, approached sorrowfully to the dying prince, and said to him, "What tidings shall I carry back of you to the country, Monseigneur?"—"You will say," answered Robert, with a smile, pointing to his bearers, "that you saw me carried to Paradise by four devils."

the din of arms prevented them from founding churches in her honour. The famous Tancred, and Robert Guiscard, lords of the small maritime village of Hauteville, which has not preserved a stone of their castle, but which still possesses the old church without a steeple, all covered with moss and grass, where these *Norman lions* received Baptism, sent from the extremity of La Pouille—where they forced sixty thousand Saracens to retreat before five hundred Norman lances—the half of a treasure which they had just found to Geoffroy de Moubray, Bishop of Contances, to build, under the invocation of *St. Mary*, that fine and fairy cathedral which extorted even from Vauban that exclamation of admiration and astonishment, "What sublime fool has raised this noble edifice to the sky!"

Precisely at the same epoch, a brother of Robert Guiscard, the Count Roger of Hauteville, founded in conquered Sicily the celebrated cathedral of Messina, which he did not fail to dedicate to the Blessed Virgin, according to the custom of his house. This sumptuous edifice, which was consecrated in the year 1097, partook somewhat of all the known styles of architecture; the Byzantine mosaic was brought into union with the arabesque of the Saracens, and with the graceful Gothic turrets, adorned with statues of saints and angels, lavishly gilded. In the sumptuous treasury of this cathedral is preserved a letter of the Blessed Virgin, on which the devotion of the inhabitants of Messina prides itself,[1] and on which several Sicilian bishops have

(1) This letter, which was at first translated into Greek by Lascari, who is reproached with having invented it, was found later on in Syriac, among the old MSS. of the Bishop of Mardin, in Syria, and was translated into Latin by D. Joseph Assemani, a noble Maronite, interpreter of the Oriental languages at the Vatican library. We have not to examine the value of this piece, which has been placed among the apocryphal writings, in spite of numberless protests: we merely give it as a curious and ancient document.

"Maria Virgo, Joachim et Annæ filia, humilis ancilla Domini, Mater Jesu Christi, qui est ex tribu Juda, et de stirpe David, Messanensibus omnibus salutem, et a Deo Patre omnipotente benedictionem."

"Per publicum documentum constat vos misisse ad nos nuncios, fide magna; vos scilicet credere Filium nostrum a nobis genitum esse Deum et hominem, et post resurrectionem suam ad cœlum ascendisse; vosque, mediante Paulo, apostolo

written volumes, to demonstrate its authenticity, which is rather disputed. In the same cathedral is celebrated every year the feast of *Varra*, destined to perpetuate the remembrance of the defeat of the Saracens by the Norman heroes; the Blessed Virgin, represented by a young girl, figures in the festival, borne on a magnificent triumphal car, while hideous colossal figures represent the Mussulmans conquered by Count Roger.

It was from Normandy that the religious light came which dissipated the pagan darkness of the North, and it was the Blessed Virgin who received, in her beautiful cathedral of Rouen, the first fruits of that holy harvest. Harold II., King of Denmark, who had come at the head of a hundred galleys to the succour of Richard the Dauntless, there abjured paganism, and Olaus, King of Norway, who had joined his standard to the banner of Normandy in a small war which Duke Richard II. waged against Eudes, Count of Blois, was converted by Robert, Archbishop of Rouen,[1] to Christianity, of which he became the apostle in his own states. This holy king ventured to overthrow with his own hands the statue of Thor, the tutelary divinity of Norway, in the old temple of Drontheim, which the Norwegian pirates had encircled with a chain of gold, and where they came to swear upon the bracelets of that god of war, whose club was so formidable to the *giants of frost.* Olaus sent into Sweden Christian missionaries, who were well received there, and the gilded walls of the temple of Upsal, freed from their idols,

electo, viam veritatis agnovisse. Propterea vos vestramque civitatem benedicimus et protegimus, et defendimus eam in sæcula sæculorum.

"Data fuit hæc epistola die quinto, in urbe Hierusalem, a Maria Virgine, cujus nomen supra, anno XXXXII a Filio ejus, sæculo primo, die 3 Junii, una XXVII.

"La chiesa metropolitana de Messina fu dedicata alla beatissima V. M. della Sacra Lettera, e vi si celebra tutti gli anni una grande festa. L'antica e pia tradizione della sacra lettera della gran Madre di Dio sempre Virgine Maria, scritta alla nobile ed exemplare cita di Messina, illustrata con nuovi documenti, ragioni e verisimili congetture, dal P. Maestro D. Pietro Menniti, abbate generale di S. Basilio Magno."

(1) Antiquités de la ville de Rouen.

purified from their human sacrifices,[1] received the consecrated images of CHRIST and his Mother.

It was no fault of the princes of Christian Europe, if the sun of the gospel had arisen so late in the horizon of the kingdoms of the North; from the middle of the seventh century, the Saxon Willibrord had made fruitless attempts to convert Jutland, which the missionaries sent by Witikind, the convert of Charlemagne, renewed without success in the course of the eighth; the ninth opened under more favourable auspices. Driven from his states, Harold Klack, king of a part of Jutland, came to seek refuge at the court of Louis the Meek, where he embraced Christianity. A contemporary chronicler, Ermold the Black, abbot of a monastery of the empire of the Franks, describes in a picturesque manner the arrival of the *sea-king* and his Danish fleet. "What do I see shining in the rays of the aurora, and covering afar the waters of the river? What ships sail up the proud Rhine with warlike pomp? How these sails, of silvery whiteness, glitter in the sunshine on the mirror of the waters and the dancing of the waves!" This conversion of the Jutland prince was almost a solitary one, notwithstanding the exertions of Anschar, the apostle of the North; and those ships with gilded prows, the object of the natural admiration of the warrior Franks, did but too well remember their course to Western Europe.

The conversion of King Harold II. was more beneficial to the Christian religion than that of the Jutland prince. On his return to his country, he forbade the sacrifices, shut up the temples of false gods, built Christian churches, and favoured with all his power the propagation of the Gospel. His son, Sweno, a savage

(1) The Scandinavians sacrificed to Odin prisoners in time of war, and criminals in time of peace; but they did not always confine themselves to persons so vile, and in great calamities they sacrificed even kings to appease the gods. It was thus that the first king of Vermelande was burnt in honour of Odin, to procure the cessation of a great dearth; and, as we learn in the history of Norway, kings did not spare their own children,—Hacco, King of Norway, offered his in sacrifice to obtain a victory; a king of Sweden consecrated his sons to Odin, that the god might prolong his life.—(See Wormius, Monument Danic et Sax. grammat., lib. x.)

prince and pirate at heart, who had set himself up as the champion of idolatry, slew him treacherously with the shot of an arrow, reopened the temples of Odin and Thor, and levelled the Christian churches to the ground. After his death, which occurred in the year 1014, Christianity again raised its head, and began again to be spread abroad. The transition from one worship to another, however, was not precipitate, as it was with the young and ardent conquerors of Gaul and England; the Christian churches of Denmark arose for a century by the side of the stone of sacrifice. If CHRIST and his Mother were venerated, neither were the gods of the Walhalla without power; Thor still kept his club in his hands armed with iron gauntlets, and if a hymn was chanted to Mary beneath the vaulted ceiling of her chapel, it was the hymn of Odin which they intoned in their battles, it was Odin whom they thanked for victory, by offering him a sacrifice of birds of prey. It seemed hard to the Northern warriors to abandon altogether those warlike divinities whose tombs they possessed, and who had made their fathers so brave. They acknowledged that CHRIST was God, and consented to adore him as such; but why drive from their thrones the ancient gods of the country, to make room for a strange God? Could they not reign together? The Walhalla was full of chaste women; it might receive the Virgin Mary. Under shelter of this last intrenchment, paganism was more formidable than ever, and the first Christian neophytes made a monstrous mixture of the two religions with a view to conciliation.[1] This state of things continued till the reign of Canute the Great, who secured the preponderance to Christianity.

The religious veneration of the Blessed Virgin contributed greatly to the establishment of the Gospel among the Scandinavians. From time immemorial they had placed virginity in heaven, under the features of Falla, whose flaxen hair was bound with a golden fillet, and of Gesione, who admitted in her celestial train chaste young women, after their death. Three virgins, seated under the sacred ash-tree, disposed of the destiny of

(1) Muntev., Hist. de Danemark; Mallet, Hist. de Danemark.

mortals; and those *white ladies* also were virgins, who walked upon the lakes like a column of mist, seated themselves at midnight beneath the frozen shadow of the pincs, and with soft and slow voices sung Runic hymns, which the Scalds had cut with the points of their swords on the rocks which hung over the mound which was the burial-place of those heroes *whom the ravens of the sky bewailed.*[1] It cost them much to abjure those handsome fairies of the North, who were said to come into the cottage of the labourer and the fortress of the *jarl* (earl) invisibly, and with whom good fortune entered also. These superstitions, equally dear to the great and to the people,[2] would perhaps never have been totally effaced without the Blessed Virgin, who became the protectress of the cottage and the palace. The influence of the Queen of heaven in the conversion of the Scandinavians is proved by a fact which no one calls in question,—that Christianity owed its progress among these people to the mothers, who afterwards gained over the warriors.[3]

The first kings of Denmark were fervent servants of Mary. St. Canute, Duke of Schleswig, dedicated to her three superb churches; Valdemar II. had her image placed upon his shield, which was covered with plates of gold, and having learned that the Russians, leagued with the Esthonians, threatened the infant church of Riga, he solemnly bound himself to enter Esthonia the next year, as well for the honour of the Blessed Virgin, as for the remission of his sins.[4] It was in this war, begun under the

(1) "When Rogvald was killed," says the famous northern Scald, Regnier Lodbrog, in his Epicedium, or Funeral Hymn, "all the ravens of the sky bewailed him." Apparently because he gave them sumptuous feasts of carcases.

(2) The religion of the Scandinavians had become entirely corrupt; it no longer insisted on the worship of one supreme God; the intelligences which had emanated from him seemed no longer to depend upon him, and by a consequence of that almost invincible tendency which has always led men to multiply the objects of their adoration, they had acquired an equal right to the government of the world. The worship of fairies and genii, auguries and divinations, had, by degrees, become essential to the religion of the north.—(Malet, Hist. de Danemark.)

(3) Ibid.

(4) Chronique Livonienne, p. 122.

auspices of Mary, that the Danes, surprised in their camp, lost their national flag. As they began to give way before the pagans, the Blessed Virgin, whom they had devoutly invoked before they entered Esthonia, gave them, it is said, a sensible mark of her powerful protection; a red banner with a white cross upon it fell from heaven, according to contemporary chroniclers, and with this banner victory returned.[1] The veneration of Mary flourished long in the three kingdoms of the North, the great number of cathedrals, hermitages, and monasteries which were dedicated to her prove it. When the burning wind of the Reformation had blasted this heavenly flower of Catholicism, this devotion was still kept up secretly, and fifty years after Luther, people still came to venerate Mary in the subterranean chapel of Upsal.[2] This consoling devotion came to an end in these hyperborean regions as it had begun at Rome,—among the tombs.

It was under the influence of Mary that Prussia, with the entire coast of the Baltic Sea, received the light of the Gospel. The Friars Hospitallers of the Blessed Virgin, better known under the name of Teutonic Knights, civilized these barbarous countries, of which hell (*Poklus*) and the god of thunder (*Perkonnas*) were the principal divinities.

Among the nations of Sclavonic origin, who substituted Christianity for their sanguinary rites, and polished their manners under its civilizing influence, no people more devoutly honoured the Blessed Virgin than the Hungarians.

About the beginning of the eleventh century, St. Stephen, the first Christian king of the Huns or Hungarians, founded, in thanksgiving for a victory over the Prince of Transylvania, Our Lady of Albe-Royale. This fine Sclavonic basilica did not yield in magnificence to the most sumptuous churches of the East. Its walls adorned with superb sculptures, its pavements of marble,

(1) Malet, who criticises this legend, acknowledges, however, that no Danish historian explains, in a satisfactory manner, the origin of this banner apart from the prodigy.

(2) M. Marmier, Lettre à M. Salvandy.

its altars covered with plates of gold, and inlaid with valuable stones; its vessels of silver, gold, and onyx, made it marvellous to behold. On the altar of the Blessed Virgin were certain silver dishes, on which two old men, who in their childhood had been familiar with the exploits of Attila, burned the rarest perfumes of Asia. Processions came several times a day to honour the Mother of God in her sanctuary.

These splendours did not appear sufficient to the piety of the Hungarian prince; this descendant of the *Scourge of God*, would hold his royal sceptre from the Virgin, whom he declared the sovereign of his dominions. Thus, every time that the name of Mary was pronounced throughout the extent of this vast kingdom, there was no Hungarian nobleman, however high his lineage, who did not bend his knee to the ground, like a vassal before his lady, and bow his head in token of profound respect.[1] In the fortified precincts of every castle, small chapels were found, lighted by several lamps of brass or massive silver, which burned night and day before the image of Mary. The palatinate princes even carried that image with them into battle, and set up oratories to it in their tents.

The veneration of Mary was no less warmly accepted on the banks of the Vistula. Dating from the day when Dumbrowka, the fair Bohemian princess, converted King Micislas, and induced him to destroy the idols which his fathers had set up to Pagoda (*calm air*), to Pochwist (*cloudy sky*), and to the sombre divinities of the deep, the Poles, become thoroughly Catholics, vied with each other in building chapels of larch to the Mother of God. Pagan banners, brought away from twenty battle-fields, were the sole embellishments of these primitive churches, concealed beneath the evergreen pines of the Sclavonian forests; but when the priest of Jesus Christ, as he celebrated mass, read the Gospel to these northern heroes, kneeling before an altar as poor as the willow-wood manger of our Saviour, you would have seen all their swords half-drawn out of their sheaths in token of protection

(1) Bonifacius, Hist. Virg., lib. ii. c. 2.

and defence.[1] Nor was this any vain demonstration. Poland was long the bulwark of Christendom; but for John Sobieski, perhaps the crescent would have surmounted all the towers of the cities beyond the Rhine.

Poland was early consecrated to the Blessed Virgin; Mary was solemnly invoked under the title of *Queen of Poland* long before John Casimir renewed the consecration. Every time that the Polish army was in motion to march against the Tartars, it was the banner of Mary that guided its warlike phalanxes;[2] the cry of JESUS twice repeated was the war-cry; a canticle to the Blessed Virgin was the hymn of battle.[3]

CHAPTER IX.

CHIVALRY.

THE gigantic empire of Charlemagne had disappeared like a brilliant phantom; the last of the Carlovingians had been despoiled of his kingdom, reduced to nothing by the imprudent liberality of his fathers; and the dukes of France, who maintained that they likewise were descended from Charlemagne, after twice attempting the royal mantle, ended by taking possession of it. Before they combined the impoverished crown with their own great fief, with which they endowed it, the counts of Paris had

(1) This custom goes back to Micislas, who was the first king of Poland.—(Hist. de Pologne, by M. L. S., t. i. p. 43.)

(2) The Blessed Virgin Mary was Queen of Poland; accordingly, whenever they took up arms against the Tartars, her image adorned the national standard. —(La Pologne Historique et Litteraire, t. i. p. 396.)

(3) In the tenth century, we see St. Adalbert, Bishop of Prague, composing sacred canticles for the Polish troops who fought against the Pomeranians and pagan Prussians. One hymn of St. Adalbert's, *Boga-Rodziça* (Mother of God), has long been the battle hymn of the Poles.—(Alb. Sowinski, Coup d'œil historique sur la musique religieuse et populaire en Pologne.)

given striking proofs of their devotion to the Blessed Virgin. When that unknown and terrible malady, which was called *feu des ardents*, after ravaging the south of the kingdom, reached the Isle of France, Hugh the Great supported, at his own expense, the poor sick pilgrims who came to pray for their cure, which they obtained, at Our Lady of Paris.[1]

Hugh Capet, the founder of the third dynasty, had a sincere devotion to the Blessed Virgin; and Queen Adelaide of Aquitaine, his pious spouse, loaded with her gifts the fine Abbey of Our Lady of Argenteuil, which from that time possessed the holy relic which is still to this day exposed to the veneration of the faithful. Robert, who proclaimed Mary *the Star* of his fine kingdom, built, in her honour, monasteries at Poissy, Melun, Etampes, and Orleans, as we learn from Helgaud. The church of Orleans was called Our Lady of Good Tidings, and built on the very spot where Robert, who was only at that time heir presumptive to the throne, had learnt that his father, Hugh Capet, had just escaped death.—How worthy a son of a king!

Under the reign of Philip I., grandson of Robert, a prince who showed himself more disposed to plunder the church than to enrich it, a great event happened, which gave to the kings of France the kings of England for their vassals. William the Bastard, son of that duke Robert the Magnificent, who died in the course of his pilgrimage to the Holy Land, conquered England in a single battle, and established there the Norman rule. William, like his father Robert, held Mary in wonderful reverence; that conqueror, so brave, so able a politician, who, with a single frown of his brow made England tremble from one end to the other, was no sooner attacked by fever, than he humbly joined his warlike hands to recommend himself to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Falling sick in the castle of *Chierbourg,* a small town defended at that time by good ditches and certain round towers, which the ocean lashed with its green billows, he made a vow to build a chapel to the Blessed Virgin if, by her

(1) Felibien, Hist. de Paris, t i.

powerful intercession, he should speedily recover his health; he got well, and religiously performed his vow. He rebuilt, at his own expense, the superb Abbey of Jumièges, where the cleric found learning and the poor man bread, on condition that its church, which Queen Bathildes had dedicated to St. Peter, should be placed under the invocation of the Mother of God. He assisted in person, with the Duchess Matilda and all his great Norman barons, on the 1st of July, in the year of grace 1068, at the dedication of this church; and some years later he crossed the sea to be present at that of Our Lady of Bayeux, with his two sons, William and Robert; Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Thomas, Archbishop of York, by invitation of the bishop, Philip d'Harcourt, who had rebuilt it. No doubt it was then that the Duchess Matilda paid homage to St. Mary of Bayeux, by presenting that celebrated historical tapestry in which her patient needle has worked the great epoch of the conquest of England; "this drapery, embroidered with figures and inscriptions," was hung the whole length of "the nave of the church on the day and during the octave of the relics," says an inventory of the treasure of Our Lady of Bayeux, drawn up in 1476.[1]

This fair and pious princess, whose memory was in so great veneration that the Saxon wife of her son, Henry I. of England, had to change her pleasing name of Editha for that of Matilda, "to please the Norman knights," has left other proofs of her devotion to the Blessed Virgin besides the memorial tapestry which she consecrated to her.

She was walking, about the end of the month of October, in one of those beautiful Norman meadows, the grass of which is like an immense carpet of velvet, painted with flowers, with her two young sons,—two future heroes, the elder of whom was to

(1) This precious tapestry, contemporary with the conquest of England, remained in a manner unknown for six centuries. Exposed on certain days of the year only, in the nave of the cathedral, tradition had surnamed it Duke William's tapestry. It was F. Montfaucon who succeeded in discovering that it was from Bayeux, and who enriched his Monumens de la Monarchie Françaíse with designs from this tapestry, which till then was so little known.

immortalise himself by his chivalrous exploits at the taking of Jerusalem,—and certain ladies of her court, when a courier from Duke William, who was galloping at full speed towards Rouen, stopped his powerful horse, and rushed with one bound into the meadow when he perceived her. "What news of my lord and the Norman army?" asked Matilda, pale with agitation . . . . "the battle?" . . . . "Is gained, noble lady," replies the courier, as he bends his knee and presents to the youthful duchess, whose trembling hand was reached out to him, the despatch, with the seal hanging to it, which confirmed the truth of his words; "the perjured Harold has been conquered; his body, which ought not to have had any other burial-place than the sands of that shore which he unjustly kept from us, rests in the choir of the Saxon abbey of Waltham; England is the vassal of Normandy!" The Norman princess made the sign of the cross for joy, and made a vow to raise on the very spot where she heard of the brilliant success of the expedition of William and his knights, a memorial church, under the name of Our Lady of the Meadow, which was afterwards changed into that of Our Lady of Good Tidings. She actually began it some years later, and her son, Henry I., after completing it, magnificently endowed it.[1]

In his last war against France, William the Conqueror gave up Mantes to the flames; but those flames which consumed the church of Notre Dame, cast a glare so fearful, that the horse of the King of England backed, reared up, and threw his rider, who received a mortal injury. Attributing the fatal accident which deprived him of life to the burning of the beautiful church of the Blessed Virgin, he left in his will a considerable sum to restore it. Being removed to a neighbouring abbey of Rouen, the conqueror of England was awakened, at daybreak of the 9th of September, 1087, by the sound of a matin bell: "What is that?" he asked, painfully lifting up his head, emaciated indeed, but still

(1) "In the time of Archbishop Godfrey, King Henry, the first of the name, king of England, ordered the Priory of du Pré to be built, called Nostre Dame de Bonne Nouvelle lez Rouen, which his deceased mother, Matilda, had begun with the bridge of Rouen."—(Ant. de la ville de Rouen, p. 136.)

full of that proud and masculine beauty, which the Saxon chroniclers themselves, who held him much more in fear than in love, could not deny him. As he was answered that it was the bells of St. Mary's church ringing for prime: "My Lady, St. Mary," said the Norman hero, lifting up his hands, "I recommend my soul to you: may you reconcile me to your Son, my Lord Jesus!" As he said these words, he expired.

Henry I., his son, who had usurped the crown from Robert, his elder brother, whose eyes he had put out, and whose devotion was problematical, though he professed to have a great deal, made some magnificent foundations in England, where he introduced the architecture of the Normans, which did not in any way hinder him from setting fire to many a church in Normandy. He burnt, for example, in 1120,—the date is remarkable,—the cathedral of Lisieux, with the city itself; that ancient cathedral, which could be traced back to the first ages of Christianity, was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, like almost all the Norman cathedrals. The punishment for this sacrilegious act of incendiarism followed him closely; at the end of the same year, the ship which had on board the only son of King Henry, the prince William of England, and two other royal children less legitimate, went down, in a fine calm sea and in broad moonlight, in the current of Gatteville, near Barfleur. From that time, no one ever saw King Henry smile.

The Empress Matilda, daughter of this prince, had a signal proof of the protection of the Blessed Virgin and her power over the elements. Forced to embark for Normandy in uncertain weather, which soon turned to a storm, during the war which she waged against Stephen of Blois, she was assailed, in the dangerous sea where her brother William had perished with half the English court a few years before, by one of those violent tempests which are seen only on the angry ocean. The horizon spread out a vast black curtain which reached from sea to sky, like the hangings at a funeral; huge waves, like mountains, and loaded with sea-weeds of a bluish green, swelled up darkly and slowly, and then came and broke with a loud crash against the

sides of the royal vessel, which they lifted up upon their watery backs to precipitate the next moment in the hollow of the waves, where it disappeared altogether. The sailors shook their heads as they did their work, while the English lords, making the sign of the cross through fear, recommended themselves to God, to the Blessed Virgin, and St. George, the patron of chivalry. Matilda stood upon the deck, and her firm though pale countenance did not belie the brave race of her forefathers. "Have good hope, my lords," she said, turning to her faithful noblemen, "Our Lady is good and powerful; Our Lady will save us; I will sing a canticle of thanksgiving to her as soon as the coast appears, and I make a vow to build her an abbey on that part of the shore where we shall land." Scarcely had the Anglo-Norman princess pronounced her vow, than the waves were seen to become smooth; the wind abated, and the ship flew over the wave like a water-fowl. A dark spot was soon seen against a blue corner of the sky left by the flying clouds; it grew larger and larger still; it was a mountain of moderate size, the bare top of which was crowned with a hermitage; a vast forest was seen in an opening in the background of the picture. Then the hoarse and shrill voice of the man on the watch let fall from the top of the mainmast these words, so impatiently expected: "Cante, reyne! . . . . vechi terre" (Sing, O Queen! there is the land); and the daughter of Henry I. began to sing with a sweet and grave voice a hymn to the Blessed Virgin, which the English barons joyfully repeated, with hands joined and heads uncovered.

Very soon the vessel, saved miraculously from shipwreck, cast anchor in the little bay of Equeurdreville, in Lower Normandy. The first care of the princess when she disembarked, was to mark out the site of her monastery, which she named the Abbey of the Vow, and before she left the place, she herself laid the first stone.

Matilda did not live long enough to see the church and abbey of the vow finished; it was her son, Henry II., King of England, who inaugurated them. In the necrology of that abbey we read:

—"On the 4th of the ides of September died the Empress Matilda, foundress of this monastery; a *Libera* is to be said for her, *the same* as for a canon."

Let not our age, which is so cold as to what regards God and the saints, make too light of those vows made to our Lady in a tempest; the greatest infidel believes *in something* on board a vessel in danger of perishing: M. de Volney is a proof of this. As he was on a voyage with some friends along the coast of Baltimore, the wind suddenly arose, and the little American bark, which had on board the flower of the infidels of both worlds, seemed twenty times over in danger of perishing. Every one had already betaken himself to prayer, and the author of the *Ruines* like the rest, when the storm gradually abated. Some one who had seen M. de Volney make use of a rosary, and recite a number of *Hail Marys* with edifying fervour, as long as the danger continued, came up to him at the return of the calm,—"My dear Sir," said he to him, with provoking good nature, "to whom were you addressing yourself a little while ago?" "We are freethinkers in our cabinets," replied his travelling companion, somewhat disconcerted at the occurrence, "but we are no longer so in a tempest."

The Empress Matilda wished her mortal remains to be interred in the most celebrated of the Norman abbeys in honour of the Blessed Virgin, at St. Mary du Bec; her son Henry, who was as yet only Duke of Anjou and Normandy, had a tomb erected for her, which he covered with plates of silver. When he became King of England, he continued to protect and honour this abbey, *out of reverence* to the Blessed Virgin and to his mother, which was partly rebuilt by his royal liberality. In 1178, it was consecrated afresh by Rotrou, Bishop of Rouen; Henry II. assisted at this pious ceremony with his son, Henry Shortmantle.

Richard Cœur de Lion, son and successor of Henry II., built, before his departure for the crusade, Our Lady of Good Haven, in the diocese of Evreux, and assisted with his brilliant chivalry at the dedication of that monastery, which took place in the year

1190.[1] When his eventful life was near its end, and when mortally wounded with an arrow at the inglorious siege of a strong castle, he dictated his last will, he directed by his testament that his heart should be taken to Our Lady of Rouen, "for the fervent devotion which he had for that place;" and that heart, the bravest perhaps that ever beat beneath the breastplate of a knight, "was honourably deposited on the side of the choir, towards the sacristy, in a case of silver, which was taken for the ransom of St. Louis, King of France, who was made prisoner among the Saracens, and in its place one was made of stone."[2]

This valiant champion of the Cross, whose name the Saracens never pronounced without the pious addition of—*Cursed be he!* and who took their strong cities, he, the seventh, would be interred by the side of his father, at Our Lady of Fontevrault. Berengaria of Navarre, his wife, reposes there, by his side; their effigies, painted and gilt, were placed recumbent upon their stone tombs, and among her queenly ornaments, Berengaria bears over her heart a large square medallion, on which is seen the Blessed Virgin, surrounded with many wax tapers. The celebrated Eleanor of Aquitaine, mother of King Richard, came to seclude herself in this abbey some years afterwards, and added her tomb to those royal tombs placed beneath the Gothic roof of the fine abbey church of Our Lady.

At his own request, John Lackland, who died of indigestion in a Saxon abbey,[3] was interred in great pomp in the beautiful Anglo-Norman Cathedral of Our Lady at Worcester; but if we may believe the ancient chroniclers, the body of this base and cruel prince, who had imbrued his hands in the innocent blood of Arthur of Britanny, his lawful sovereign, and who was ready to become a Turk to procure an alliance with the Moors of Spain,

(1) Gallia Christiana, t. iv.
(2) Antiquités de la ville de Rouen, p. 137.
(3) According to the Saxon chronicles, King John died of indigestion of peaches and ale, which he had had in a convent of Bernardins at Swineshead.

did not long defile the sacred abode of Mary. They relate, that in this dishonoured tomb there were heard strange noises in the night; they were blasphemies, frightful bursts of laughter, orgies, terrible things . . . which caused the monks of Worcester secretly to disinter the body of the reprobate prince, and cast it out of the consecrated ground.

The Plantagenets were distinguished for their devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and covered England with those fine Gothic churches dedicated to Mary, which still remain in every county, and which are the brightest gems of her archæological crown: Our Lady of York, which the lightness of its airy architecture, full of grandeur, has led to its being compared to a vessel under sail; Our Lady of Salisbury, another diamond cut in the noblest style, which used to be covered with Flemish hangings, and filled with lights and flowers on the solemn feasts of Mary; Our Lady of Westminster, where, says Froissard, there was an image of the Blessed Virgin, in which the English kings had *great faith*, and which wrought *many great miracles;* the superb Gothic Abbey of Walsingham, the favourite pilgrimage of Edward I. and his chivalrous court; the beautiful cathedral of Wells, of which the Lady Chapel is, by the admission of connoisseurs, the pearl of the Gothic monuments of Great Britain,—are still standing to bear witness to the piety of those princes towards the Holy Mother of Our Lord.

The Anglo-Saxons, who formed the poorer classes, the merchants, and the burgesses of England, were no less devout to the Blessed Virgin Mary than the continental princes who ruled them by right of conquest. Divided in opinion from their conquerors on almost every point, they agreed, which is of immense importance, on the subject of religion: and the two races united went fraternally together, with the staff in their hands, in pilgrimage to St. Mary's Redcliff, a fine old church full of Saxon monuments; and to Our Lady of Worcester, where Lady Warwick, the wife of the *king-maker*, offered sumptuous vestments for the service of the Blessed Virgin, after having prayed one time for the *red rose*, and another for the *white rose*, according to the

party protected, at the time of the pious pilgrimage, by her brave husband.[1]

The fast of Saturday in honour of the Blessed Virgin was observed by the English, from the time of William Rufus. A celebrated robber—a Saxon, no doubt, for St. Anselm, the Norman prelate, who relates this contemporary anecdote, calls him a robber, without further qualification—makes his way one fine morning into the cottage of a poor widow to rob it; finding nothing to suit him in this poor dwelling, the famous bandit seats himself upon the only stool of the dark room, on the floor of smooth clay, where the widow is spinning, and says to her, with a gracious air, affecting the Norman nobleman, "Well, my good gossip, have you had your breakfast?" "I, Sir?" replies the poor woman, interrupting the twisting of her ashen spindle, "God forbid! is not to-day Saturday? I fast every Saturday in the year." "Every Saturday!" repeats the astonished robber; "but, why?" "Why, in honour of the Blessed Virgin. Don't you know that that is the way for her to obtain for you the grace not to die without confession?" "Ah!" says the robber, "I am very glad to know this; and, henceforth, I make a vow to fast also." He kept his word; and on her part, the Blessed Virgin Mary did not disappoint him at the hour of his death: fatally wounded, in a dangerous expedition, she procured his life to be miraculously prolonged, to afford him time to be reconciled with God.

St. Anselm further informs us, that the bold and haughty Norman knights devoutly honoured Mary, though all the while oppressing to their utmost those who were conquered at Hastings. One of them, a very great lord, had for his varlets and pages a troop of *profligates* always ready for evil, and for a steward *an incarnate devil*, who continually persuaded him, *poor baron!* sometimes *to assault this one*, sometimes to plunder *that one*,

(1) The custom of dressing up statues of the Blessed Virgin, which still subsists in France, Spain, and Italy, existed also in England. The Countess of Warwick oftentimes made an offering of her richest robes and veils to Our Lady of Worcester; and we see, in Leland's History of Ireland, that these statues wore rings of great value.

sometimes, in fine, *to kill that other*, so that not a day passed which was not marked by some *detestable evil deed.* In the midst of this fine life, he devoutly prayed to the Blessed Virgin, night and morning, saluting her with *seven Hail Marys*, accompanied with *seven profound genuflexions*, which prevented his infernal steward from strangling him as he desired to do, and which, in the end, obtained for him the grace of a sincere conversion.[1]

The Saxon outlaws, who had taken refuge in the depths of forests, where they had become the most expert archers of England, in order to escape the capital punishment, which the Norman law attached to crimes of the chase, regretted only one thing, which was that they could not go and pray at the altar of Mary,—when some old Saxon abbey sent forth in their hearing the sound of its religious bells in the green woods, where the lark was singing merrily, and where the king's roebucks were coursing. These old English ballads in black letter, which we think we buy cheaply now-a-days, says an antiquary of Great Britain, by paying for them their weight in gold, display to us Robin Hood, the *forest king*, risking his head, after recommending himself to the Blessed Virgin, to go and pay his devotions at the monastery, where the distant bells seemed to call him.[2]

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(1) St. Anselm, in his book of the Miracles of Our Lady.

(2) Robyn Hode and the Munke, from a MS. in the Public Library, Cambridge, Ff. v. 48 ii., quoted in Jamieson's Popular Ballads, pp. 54, 55, *et seq.*:—

"In somer, when the shawes be sheyn,
And leves be large and long,
Hit is full mery in fayre forest,
To here the fouly's song;

"To se the dere draw to the le,
And leve their hillis hee,
And shadow hem in the levis grene,
Under the grene wode tre.

"Hit befel on Whitsontyde,
Erly in a May mornyng,
The sun up feyre can spring (that day),
And the birddis mery can syng.

Spain, which was no less devoted to Mary than the British Isle, had by that time erected numerous sanctuaries to her, and fought under her standard. In 1212, Alphonsus IX., having gained, under the standard of the Blessed Virgin of the Seven Dolours, his great victory of Las Navas, where the Moors experienced one of their most bloody defeats, built Our Lady of Victory at Toledo, to deposit there that banner of Mary. The King St. Ferdinand, that excellent prince, who could not bring himself

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"'This is a mery mornyng,' said Littil John,
'By hym that dyed on tre,
'And more mery man than I am one,
'Was not in Cristanté.'

"'Pluk up thi hert, my dere mayster,'
Littil John can say,
'And thynk hit is a full feyre tyme,
'In a mornyng of May.'

"'The on thyng greves me,' sayd Robyn,
'And does my hert much woo,
'That I may not no solemn day
'To mas ne matyns goo.'

"'Hit is a fourtnet and more,' sayd Robyn,
'Syn I my Savyor see.
'To day wil I to Notyngham,' sayd Robyn,
'With the myght of mylde Mary.'

* * * * * * *

"Then Robyn goes to Notyngham,
Hymselfe mornyng allone,
And Littil John to mery Scherewode,
The path he knew alkone.

"When Robyn came to Notyngham,
Sertinly with owten layn,
He prayed to God, and Mary may
To bryng hym out save agayn.

"He goes into Seynt Mary's chyrche,
And kneyld down before the rode:
Alle that ever were the chyrche within
Behold wel Robyn Hode.

"Be side hym stode a gret hedit munke,
I pray to God woo he be.
Ful some he knew gode Robyn,
As sone as he hym se."

to increase the burthens of his people, and who feared more, as he said, the maledictions of a poor woman than all the armies of the Moors, attributed to the protection of the Blessed Virgin his conquests of Cordova, Jaën, and Murcia; in fine, Alphonsus the Wise composed hymns in honour of the Mother of God, and founded in her honour an order of knighthood.[1]

Portugal trod in the same path with an ardour no less great. In 1142, after having defeated, by the protection of Mary, to whom he had commended himself before the battle, five Moorish princes, from whom he captured their five standards in the plains of Alentejo, Alphonsus I. founded in her honour the superb monastery of Aleobaça; but not confining his gratitude to that, he did homage for his kingdom to Our Lady of Clairvaux, and decreed that every year, on the feast of the Annunciation, a tribute of fifty maravedis of gold should be paid, in token of vassalage, to the feudal Lady, in the persons of the abbots of Clairvaux.[2] One of the successors of this prince, Don John I., after a victory, offered to Our Lady of the Olive-tree, as much silver as his body weighed in complete armour, and hung upon the walls of the chapel of Mary, as an *ex voto*, his lance and his brilliant suit of armour.[3] The kings of Denmark undertook, about the same time, crusades against the pagans of the north, in honour of the Blessed Virgin; and the Poles defeated the pagans of Prussia and Pomerania, singing the celebrated *Boga-Rodziça* (Mother of God), a war hymn addressed to Mary, which St. Adalbert, Bishop of Gnesna,[4] had composed in the tenth century.

The kings of France took care not to yield to foreign kings in devotion to the Queen of Angels. Louis the Young, and Philip Augustus, of glorious memory, contributed liberally to the rebuilding of Notre Dame at Paris, which Maurice de Sully, a very emi-

(1) El rey don Alonso el Sabio dedicó varios libros de presias a la Madre de Dios; y con respecto á algunas ordenó en su testamento que se cantasen en sus Estados.—(See Poetica Española, p. 162.)

(2) Angelus Manrique, Annal. Cisterc., c. 5, ad ann. 1142.

(3) F. Paul de Barry, Paradis Ouvert, &c.

(4) See note 3, p. 344.

nent bishop, sprung from the people, caused to be rebuilt, in place of the old Merovingian cathedral of King Childebert.

Attributing to the Blessed Virgin his brilliant victory of Bouvines, Philip Augustus founded, on the borders of the forest of Chantilly, on the banks of the Oise, with its deep water abounding in fish, a superb royal abbey. Guerin, Bishop of Senlis, minister and companion in arms of the king, who had ably filled the office of marshal of the camp during the battle; Matthew of Montmorency, who had immortalised himself there by capturing sixteen of the enemy's banners; Enguerrand de Coucy and William des Barres, who had formed for the king during this battle, where his life was in imminent danger, a rampart, which the whole Anglo-German army were unable to break through,—would associate themselves with this commemorative foundation, made in reverence to the *Holy Virgin Mary*, as the Cartularies express themselves.

Blanche of Castile, the celebrated regent of France, founded two fine abbeys bearing the title of the Blessed Virgin: the abbey of Maubuisson, which she called Our Lady the Royal, and Our Lady of the Lily. These two royal monasteries shared between them, according to her directions, her mortal remains.

The King Louis IX., the most holy and just prince who has worn the crown of France,—the best of kings and model of knights,—was distinguished for his tender piety towards the Blessed Virgin. He contributed to the completion of Notre Dame of Paris, and after having had built that gem in stone, so ably executed, which is called *La Sainte Chapelle*, by Peter de Montereau, the most celebrated architect of his time, in order to deposit there the holy crown of thorns of our Lord, he solemnly dedicated the lower portion of it to Our Lady, whose statue, placed under the porch, one day wrought a charming miracle in favour of a *very sensible* little girl, if we may believe the tradition. As the pious and quite young child, having got upon a stone seat for the use of the poor, stood on tiptoe with her little feet, and stretched up her arms as high as she could, to place on the head of the Madonna a crown of white roses, the *good Virgin*

graciously bent down her fair marble forehead to the little angel of the earth; which is the reason, says a religious of the time of Louis XIII., that she still has her head quite bent down.

St. Louis recited every day, with his almoner, the office of the Blessed Virgin, even on his journeys, and forbade any one to interrupt him; he fasted on bread and water on the vigils of the feasts of Our Lady, and gave great alms on Saturdays in her honour. "When he designed to undertake the crusade, he came to Notre Dame of Paris, accompanied by his barons, quite barefoot, with a hood on his neck and the staff in his hands, and heard mass there with great devotion."

On his arrival in Egypt, the king found, where he wished to land, a Mussulman army drawn up in order of battle. The air was darkened by the clouds of arrows discharged at the French boats by the Saracens, whose lances glittered through the dust which their horses stirred up, like fire behind a dark curtain; their commander wore "armour of fine gold so bright," says Joinville, in his peculiar language, "that it seemed when the sun shone upon it, that it was that heavenly body itself." Their standards were surmounted with that antique crescent of gold which was the emblem of the Turkish kings long before the days of Cyrus;[1] and their warlike weapons made a "noise frightful to hear, and very strange to the French." But Louis IX. and his brave men were not so easily terrified. As they were but a short distance from the shore, the holy king, after commending himself to God and the Blessed Virgin, casts himself the first into the sea; the foaming waves cover him to the shoulders; a cloud of arrows falls round about him; but neither waves nor arrows can stop him: with his shield over his neck, his helmet on his head, and his sword in his hand, he falls upon the Saracens with a true *furia Francese;* the whole army fly after him, and the Africans are completely routed to the loud cries of *Mont Joie, Saint Denis!* When the Egyptian horsemen had disappeared, driven by the wind of fear, the gates of Damietta, the key of the

(1) See Firdousi, Mœurs des Rois.

Delta, were forced to open to the crusaders, whose first care was to make the triumphant chant of the *Te Deum* resound in the mosque of the Mussulmans, which was consecrated by the Roman legate under the title of Our Lady of Damietta.

The fame of this glorious day soon reached Syria, where they attributed the honour of it to the protection of Our Lady of Tortosa, a celebrated Syrian Madonna, to which the Mahometans themselves came to pray, and which was said to have left its sanctuary to protect the landing of the French crusaders.[1]

The disastrous termination of this crusade in Egypt, so brilliantly commenced, is but too well known. After paying an enormous ransom, St. Louis turned the prow of his vessels towards Syria; the Christians, who had become masters of Palestine in 1099, possessed nothing there then but a few strong places, among which was Nazareth, the birthplace of Mary, which had been transformed into a feudal fortress, and the first Frank lord of which had been the bravest of the brave, Tancred, of whom Tasso has so nobly sung in his Jerusalem Delivered. St. Louis had the walls of the Galilean fortress rebuilt, and being there on the day of the Assumption, he had the office sung with the accompaniment of organs and string instruments in the Church of St. Mary, where he communicated with great solemnity.

As King Louis IX. was leaving the Holy Land with his Queen Margaret, a squall of wind drove the vessel which carried them beneath a high promontory, which cast its shadow a long way over the waters. When the tempest was abated, they cast anchor before this Syrian mountain, which was crowned by a monastery,

(1) The Sire de Joinville, who, during his residence in Asia, went to Our Lady of Tortosa, relates that in his time, that celebrated Syrian Madonna wrought a miracle in favour of a poor man possessed by the devil, who was brought one day before the altar of Our Lady of Tortosa, and so, continues the Sire de Joinville, as they prayed to Our Lady for his cure, the devil, whom the poor man had within him, answered, "Our Lady is not here; she is in Egypt, to help the King of France and the Christians, who at this moment are arriving in the Holy Land on foot, against the pagans, who are mounted." The seneschal adds that, on the very day that the devil spoke these words, the French army disembarked in Egypt.

and in the silence of the night, which was scarcely broken by the low murmur of the subdued waves, was heard the religious sound of distant bells, which came with the odoriferous scent of marjoram and wild thyme. "What is that?" eagerly asked St. Louis, who was still awake. The Phœnician sailors who manned the ship answered, that it was the convent of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. The holy king landed at the first dawn of day, to go and hear mass at the monastery of Mary, the religious of which, clad in the striped dress of brown and white of the Arabs, lived on fruits and vegetables, fasted half the year, kept rigorous silence, and worked with their hands; the fervent and cenobitic spirit of the ancient solitaries of the desert still reigned there. Penetrated with respect for this austere piety, St. Louis took away with him six of these religious, who were called Friars of the Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, and established them at Paris, on the banks of the Seine. They removed later on to the place Maubert, and their new church, consecrated under the title of Our Lady of the Carmelites, was built principally by the liberality of Jane of Evreux, third wife and widow of Charles II., called the Fair. This princess offered to the Blessed Virgin of Mount Carmel her crown of diamonds, emeralds, and rubies; she added to it her rich girdle embroidered with pearls, and the nosegay of golden lilies set with precious stones, which the king had given to her on the day of her coronation. Fifteen hundred gold florins accompanied this royal present.[1]

The kings of France, who bravely exposed themselves in battle, habitually placed themselves under the protection of the Blessed Virgin when danger became pressing. Philip the Fair, having recommended himself to Mary in a moment of extreme danger, at the bloody battle of Mons-en-Puelle, where he had displayed all the bravery of a knight-errant, made great foundations at Our Lady of Paris after his brilliant victory, and gave for ever to Our Lady of Chartres the land and lordship of Barres,[2] with a revenue of a hundred livres.

(1) Felibien, Hist. de Paris. (2) Sebastien Rouillard, c. 6.

"After the taking of Cassel, Philip of Valois," say the *Grandes Chroniques* of St. Denis, "came to this abbey to restore the *oriflamme* which he had taken for his expedition against the Flemish, and then he went to Notre Dame, at Paris, and when there, he put on the armour which he had worn at the battle of Cassel, got into his stirrups, and in this manner entered the church of Notre Dame, and most devoutly returned her thanks, and presented to her the horse on which he rode, and all his accoutrements."[1] The king ransomed his horse and his arms of the Chapter, for the sum of a thousand livres, and had his statue on horseback erected in front of the altar of Mary. It was remarked that these two victories of Mons-en-Puelle and Cassel had been gained between the feast and the octave of the Assumption. After having beaten the Flemish at Rosbecq, Charles VI., who was then only fourteen years old, and whom they called the *little king*, sent likewise, as an offering to Our Lady of Chartres, his armour, which was very richly damaskeened, and his royal sword, covered with dolphins in gold.[2] On their part, the queens of France, at their first entry into the capital of the kingdom, did homage to Our Lady, by presenting the magnificent crown which they received from the city of Paris. That offered by Isabella of Bavaria was of gold and precious stones.[3]

It was under Philip of Valois that the wars against the English began. King Edward III. asserted his claim as legitimate heir to the throne, by right of his mother Isabella, sister of Philip the Fair, who had died without heirs, and whose nephew he was, while Philip of Valois was only his cousin german. The French peers and barons declared in favour of Philip of

(1) We read in the old Paris breviaries (*lectio quinta*):—"Quod intelligens gloriosæ memoriæ rex Philippus Valesius, cum opitulante Deo, per merita Beatæ Virginis Matris, insignem victoriam de rebellibus Flandris obtinuisset, quæ contigit anno 1328, acturus Deo et sanctæ Virgini gratias, triumphans et equitans ecclesiam Beatæ Mariæ Parisiis ingressus est, non vana ostentatione elatus, sed Deo per quem de ancipiti bello evaserat, profunda humilitate subjectus."—(Breviarii Ecclesæ Parisiensis, festa Augusti, anno 1584.)

(2) Essais Hist. sur Paris, par M. de Sainte Foix, t. iv. p. 162.

(3) Froissard, t. ii.

Valois against the princess Isabella, not in virtue of the Salic law, which does not speak of the exclusion of females, but by the authority of customs existing and passed into use. Edward replied by an argument singular enough, which is found in a letter which he wrote to the pope, "If the son," said he, "is excluded from the throne because his mother cannot occupy it, then Jesus Christ had no right to the inheritance of David, since he descended from that king only through Madam Saint Mary, his mother."

That unfortunate fancy of reigning over France, which in an evil hour crossed the mind of the English monarchs, and which covered the kingdom of the lilies with a deluge of blood, was evoked by a chivalrous appeal made in the name of the *sweet Virgin Mary*, who proved, nevertheless, later on, that she disavowed it. A *false traitor*, Robert of Artois, whom the King of France had *offended*, says an English historian, took his revenge by rekindling the flame of resentment which was almost extinct in the young king of the English, who thought of nothing at that time but of tournaments and festivities. He presents himself one day with a heron, which his Norwegian falcon had taken on the banks of the Thames, then much overshadowed with willows, in the hall where Edward was giving a royal banquet to his great barons and the noble dames of his court. Walking up to the upper end of the hall, where the king was enthroned beneath a canopy of cloth of Britanny, fringed with silver, "I bring," says he, "the most cowardly of birds, and I will give it to him among you who is the greatest coward; in my opinion it is thou, Edward, who hast suffered thyself to be disinherited of the noble country of France, of which thou wert the lawful heir." The fire of anger flashed in the eyes of the English monarch. Suspect his bravery! He became as red as scarlet with shame, and swore, by the "God of paradise and his sweet Mother," that before six months he would go and defy that count's son, who would unjustly be called king of France. When the king had sworn, the Count d'Artois presented the heron to the English lords, who swore, each for himself, war against the French, taking to witness

for this fatal oath "the honoured Virgin who bore the God who died on a cross, whom the knight Longinus struck with his lance."[1]

The first exploit of the English was the naval engagement of L'Ecluse. Sea-fights at that time no way resembled those of our modern fleets; they fought close to each other; the crews endeavoured to tear the sails of the enemy with long scythes and broad arrows, while divers under water cut holes in the vessels, to make them sink. The *ne plus ultra* of able manœuvres consisted in stranding the enemy's ships, or running them upon the rocks. Edward, who commanded his fleet in person, was wounded by an arrow at the commencement of the action, and continued nevertheless to fight on, prefacing each stroke of his lance with one of his favourite invocations—"Ah, St. Edward! ah, St. George! ah, St. Mary!" and around his red banner, on which flamed a golden dragon,[2] the English nobility uttered their mighty cries of war—"Our Lady Arundel! Our Lady Arleton! St. George!" for in that chivalrous time each warrior of note had a saint for his protector, whom he invoked with a loud voice in the engagement. Edward dishonoured his victory by having one of the French admirals hanged from a yard-arm, who had bravely defended himself; the other, who had perished, arms in hand, found a grave beneath the waves. In the midst of this scene of tumult and blood, some fine English ladies, who had come in the royal galley, with the desire of high excitement,—for it seems that women in all ages are alike in that respect,—applauded the triumph of their knights; but not one implored mercy for the vanquished! and twenty thousand French corpses reddened the blue waves of the German Ocean. The king of the English, who had not forgotten to call upon Mary during the

(1) "Mas par i cheli Dieu qui eu la croix fu mis,
Et ferus de la lanche du chevalier Longis.
* * * * *
Car je voue et promets a la Vièrge honorée,
Qui porta cheli Dieu qui fist chiel et rousée," etc.—(Le Vœu du Héron.)

(2) Stowe's Chronicle.

fight, had no sooner landed in Flanders than he went, *on foot*, says Froissard, with a great many knights, to return her thanks, in her sanctuary of Ardenbourg. This was the commencement of that war of a century's duration, during which the English carried their flag from the Garonne to the Rhine, and from the Ocean to the Mediterranean.

During this prolonged contest, interrupted by a few armistices, when they rested with their feet in blood and their hands on their poniards, the Blessed Virgin, whose abbeys the English often pillaged without scruple, was not the less an object of their veneration. After destroying a whole city, from which they departed loaded with booty, they sometimes left there one of her statues untouched upon its pedestal; and when the inhabitants, having got rid of them, came sorrowfully to visit the ruins of the stronghold, they devoutly made the sign of the cross, and exclaimed, "A miracle!"[1] That act of respect, amidst a frightful scene of devastation, was indeed a miracle.

The sanctuaries where it had pleased the Queen of heaven to manifest her power were held neuter and holy ground: they were like oases of peace, to which radiated from all points of the horizon soldiers and knights of all lands, who were nothing but pious pilgrims from the moment that they had fastened a little image of the Madonna to their helmet of polished steel, or to their hood of serge. We read in the MS. chronicles of Quercy, that certain English soldiers having been taken prisoners by those of Cahors, were set at liberty with mild and kind words, as soon as they declared themselves pilgrims of Our Lady.

The feasts of the Blessed Virgin were scrupulously observed by the English troops, who even halted on their march to celebrate them. In 1380, Buckingham, who was making himself a passage through the heart of France, sweeping all before him, stopped with his army in the forest of Marchenoir, to celebrate

(1) Our Lady of Vassiviere was thus respected in the midst of the ruins of that strong city, which the English had destroyed and pillaged.—(See Du Chesne, ch. 9, § 10, n. 6.)

the feast of Our Lady of September. The English knights devoutly heard mass in an abbey, which they found in the midst of the woods; and the long swords of Bordeaux were unstained with French blood that day.[1]

An English captain, named Norwick, whom Prince John, Duke of Normandy, and presumptive heir to the throne, had besieged unexpectedly in Angoulême, where he was destitute of provisions, ingeniously took advantage of this devotion to the Blessed Virgin, which was common to both nations, to escape from the unpleasantness of having to surrender at discretion. On the eve of the Purification, one of the greatest festivals of Our Lady which was kept in France in the time of Pepin the Short, he comes forth from the walls, and asks to parley with the prince. The latter comes up to him, and says: "Are you come to surrender?"—"No," replies the Englishman; "but we are both of us alike devoted to the veneration of the Blessed Virgin; I require, therefore, of your courtesy a suspension of arms; and that, during the whole day consecrated to this feast, it shall be forbidden for our men on either side to fight on any pretence whatever."—"I readily agree," replied the prince.

The next day, early in the morning, Norwick comes out with the garrison and all his equipage; the commanders of the French outposts stop him, and inquire what is the object of this turn out. "I want to take advantage of the truce," he replies, "to exercise my soldiers."

The fact was reported to Prince John, who said, "It is a clever trick, blessed be God! Let them go where they will, and let us be content that we have got the city."[2]

Notwithstanding the testimonies of respect which she received from the invaders, the Blessed Virgin turned from them to protect the invaded. As a nation oppressed, France had found favour before her, and more than one miracle proved it. At Poictiers, the servant of the mayor, who had sold the city to the English, and had promised to let them in, on a dark night, when

(1) See Froissard, t. ii. p. 112. (2) Ibid.

the moon was invisible in the sky, could never find the keys, which the people were astounded to see the next morning in the hands of an ancient statue of the Blessed Virgin, in her own cathedral of Notre Dame. At Rennes, which the Duke of Lancaster had besieged a long time without success, the English, despairing of taking by assault this brave and well-defended city, make a mine to blow it up. The Breton city sleeps over a volcano, without having any knowledge of the danger which it runs. When the mine has reached the cathedral of St. Mary, and the enemy is on the point of setting fire to it, in the middle of a dark night, the candles of the chapel of Our Lady of the Holy Saviour are seen lighted of themselves, the bells, pulled by invisible hands, ring a full peal, and when the inhabitants, awakened out of their sleep, and attracted by the strange light which shines in the church at midnight, run in crowds, and ask one another, "What is the matter?" the Blessed Virgin slowly stretches out her stony arm from the side of the Gothic nave, and points out the place where the mine is to be sprung. The city, warned in time, was saved. Many other examples might be cited of the protection which Mary threw around France at this disastrous period; we shall confine ourselves to the relation of the most striking of these numerous miracles, on the faith of judicious and contemporary writers.

It was after those two lamentable days, for which the cypress will wave for ever green on the noble brow of France,—after Cressy, that battle where the flower of French chivalry perished,—after Poictiers, where King John was made prisoner, with eight hundred barons, by the Black Prince. The nobility were ruined, the young regent was without troops; the most fertile fields were covered with briers; the cities, threatened with the horrors of assault by foreign troops encamped at their gates, were torn in pieces by factions within. When man has no longer anything to trust to upon earth, he kneels down, and stretches out his suppliant hands to heaven; this was what all good people did in the hamlets and towns; they confidently begged of God some prodigy, through the intercession of Mary, to see an end of these

calamities. Faith was great and sorrow inexpressible;—the prodigy was granted. Abusing his own position, and that of France, Edward III., with whom the young regent, who was afterwards Charles the Wise, was negotiating, proposed conditions so hard, so humiliating, and intolerable, that France, all expiring as she was, raised up her head with generous indignation, and said—No! At this unexpected refusal, Edward crosses the sea, and lays siege to Chartres.

The English army pitched their tents at a little distance from that splendid cathedral so magnificently rebuilt by Fulbert, with the offerings of the faithful both great and small. Situated on a hill which commands the city, the beautiful Gothic church, with its lofty steeples, which are seen at a distance of thirty miles, had the appearance of a sacred citadel, and the city was extended beneath its shade. In this sanctuary, universally revered, was a reliquary of precious wood, covered with thick plates of gold, and set with diamonds, rubies, and pearls, where was kept one of the precious garments of Mary, her festal robe of Babylonian cloth, with blue, violet, white, and gold flowers. One day the Normans had come to besiege Chartres, and the inhabitants, quite determined to defend their temple, had taken this holy relic for their standard; the Normans had seen the relic, and had fled. It was customary at that time to touch the reliquary with the fine linen of Britanny, which the great lords wore on the day when they were dubbed knights; Richard Cœur de Lion, to whom some of this had been brought even to England, had offered in return to our Lady of Chartres a beautiful jewel of gold and precious stones, containing relics of St. Edward. The Madonna of Chartres was therefore in great veneration among the English knights, and more than one, no doubt, secretly blamed the king for coming to expose the holy things of the Cathedral of Mary to sacrilege and plunder.

The city, summoned to surrender to the King of England, simply replied that it would not; and the messengers of Edward saw nothing more of it but the massive and well-barred iron gate, above which, in a charming Gothic niche, decorated with

open work of trefoils, was a white Madonna with this inscription cut upon stone: TUTELA CARNUTUM!

The siege of the ancient capital of the Carnutes was prolonged, and the fertile fields of La Beauce bristled with English swords instead of ears of corn; the Dauphin attempted a negotiation to save his favourite city of Our Lady; but Edward was deaf to his offers and representations. The French negotiators, roughly refused, dared no longer to indulge a hope, and the city seemed on the brink of capture, when there happened, says Froissard, "a miracle which greatly humbled and broke down the courage of the English prince. A thunderstorm, a tempest so great and horrible, came down upon the army of the King of England, that it seemed as if the world was coming to an end; for there fell from the sky stones so large that they killed both men and horses, and the boldest were quite dismayed."

"If thou sowest in the garden of life the seed of anger," say the ancient sages of Iran,[1] "thy star shall have to weep." The king of the English must have made some reflections of this kind, when the sun arose, like a golden lamp, to show him the disasters of the preceding evening. His whole camp was laid waste; the tents in shreds, let their drapery hang about as if they had been tossed in the air, and on that immense plain, where the green wheat had been trodden down by the English cavalry, seven thousand horses were stretched lifeless by the side of their riders. No fact in history is better attested than this extraordinary event. Edward was so struck by it, that he long remained impressed with this miracle, as he himself acknowledged to the continuator of Naugis.

Some time after, in conformity with the promise which he had made in his fright to the powerful Protectress of Chartres, he signed the peace concluded at Bretigny, a small town of the Chartraine, and his great lords, who carried their heads so high, laying aside their arrogance for a moment, came in the peaceful

(1) Iran was the name of Persia before the time of Cyrus.

and humble equipage of pilgrims to bend their knees before the Blessed Virgin.

But the intervention of Mary, in the almost desperate affairs of France, was not confined to this; she raised up one of those powerful men, whose iron arm suffices of itself to support a falling kingdom: she planted a hatred of the English in the heart of a young Breton, who made his first campaign under her auspices, and took her name for his war-cry. The armies which the red banner of Albion led to battle were scattered like straw carried before the wind, to the cry of "Our Lady of Guesclin!"

When the insanity of the unfortunate Charles VI.—that prince, so brave, so beloved by his people, and so devoted to Mary—had revived the fallen hopes of the kings of England, and Henry of Monmouth, yielding to the temptation to unite the noble crown of France to his own ill-gotten crown, crossed the sea to do a hundred times worse than King Edward and his son had done, the Virgin brought against him only a young maiden with a pure soul, who let her humble shepherdess's crook fall from her indignant hands to lay hold of the sword of battle. It was while lighting up mystic candles before the revered image of Our Lady of Bermont, and decorating with flowers the hermitage of St. Mary,[1] that Joan Darc,* obedient to the interior voice that excited her, conceived the bold design of ridding France of the *English people*, and procuring the coronation of the young dauphin, Charles. It was done moreover as the Blessed Virgin had willed, and as the inspired shepherdess had announced; St. Mary's of Rheims, where the kings of France at that time went to *watch their armour*, with the young lords of their court,[2] before they put on the knight's spurs, joyfully and proudly threw open her wide doors to let the true King of France

(1) Deposition of the witnesses on the enquiry of Vaucouleurs concerning the habits of Joan Darc.

* This spelling is advisedly adopted, as it has now been satisfactorily shown that the name of the humble peasant was simply Darc.—Translator.

(2) Froissard.

enter—he alone who could justly be the anointed of the Lord. A flight of little birds[1] went to tell the angels this news of happy augury; and close to the prince on his knees, at the foot of the altar, where Clovis had bowed his haughty Sicambrian head under the water of baptism, "the daughter of God, the daughter of the great heart," the chaste heroine sent by the Blessed Virgin, unfurled, with a countenance where modesty was blended with the most lively joy, her banner of white mohair, where those two moving and saving names, JESUS and MARY, were seen in letters of gold.

CHAPTER X.

THE MILITARY AND RELIGIOUS ORDERS.

THE star of chivalry, which had shone since the Crusades in the zenith of Europe, now declined towards the horizon; but it descended like the setting sun, and its enlarged disc still shed a brilliant light; in which there seemed blended the brightness of the sword and the sacred light of tapers. Those times, brighter and better than ours, when religion was respected, and her holy laws obeyed from the palace to the cottage, were the epoch when the veneration of the Mother of God attained its highest degree; for everything was then done by her, and for her sake. "It is quite natural for every one to implore her aid," said the warlike troubadours of Germany in their songs, "for in heaven everything is done that she desires." This they did; and though every knight took for his heavenly protector sometimes St. James, sometimes St. George, or St. Michael, or St. Martin, whom, in

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(1) "At the coronation of our kings, from time immemorial, two or three hundred dozens of birds are set at liberty."—(Essais Historiques sur Paris, by M. de Sainte Foix, t. v. p. 26.)

their simple respect for the inhabitants of the kingdom of heaven, the feudal lords had enveloped in titles of nobility, the *honoured* Virgin, who combined every condition of beauty, meekness, and angelic purity, which became a lady high above all, was the object of a veneration very superior to that which was paid to the *Baron* St. James, and to St. George, *the good knight.* Tournaments were proclaimed, *enterprises* were accomplished, in honour of *Madam St. Mary*; kings and knights *watched their armour* in her chapels; her name, translated into all the tongues of Europe, was the war-cry of the Flemish, Danish, and English barons, as it was of Duguesclin. At the battle of Trent, the field of which is still marked by a broken column in the midst of the broom of Lower Britanny, Beaumanoir commends himself to God, to Our Lady, and St. Yvo. Seeing that his companions-in-arms redden the turf with their blood, and that the English have the advantage, he arms as a knight, in the name of Our Lady, John de la Roche, an esquire of noble descent, who was only a spectator of the combat, and Fortune, changing her banner, declares for the Bretons.[1]

After recommending themselves to Mary, they fought one against ten, with that confidence in the aid of heaven which increases the strength of man threefold; a good cause, a pure conscience, and the help of the Blessed Virgin, sufficed to do *wonders in arms*, and to gain the most brilliant victories. In 1388, an army of men of Brabant entered the duchy of Gueldres, where all was put to fire and sword. The duke had neither men nor money to repel the invaders; his counsellors were of opinion that he had better shut himself up in one of his strongholds; but he rejected this timid counsel with indignation mixed with anger. "I will neither shut myself up in any town, nor in any castle that I possess," cried he, "and will not leave my country to be burnt; I would rather die in the fields." After this chivalrous answer, the young duke arms himself for battle; but before he leaves Nimwegen, he goes to pray devoutly before the image of Our

(1) Froissard, t. xiii.

Lady, in whom he had great *confidence*, and dedicates himself and his knights to the Blessed Virgin. Having finished his prayers, he mounts his horse, at the head of four hundred lances, to go and fight an army of forty thousand men. At the sight of the enemy, the counsellors of the Flemish prince, alarmed at the inequality of the numbers, try again to dissuade him from the combat; but the duke, laying his hand upon his heart, said, "Something tells me that the day is mine. Quickly then unfurl my banner, and let him who will be a knight come forward; I will do this in honour of God and *Madam St. Mary*, of whom I took leave when I set out; to her I trust and wholly commend my undertaking. Forward! forward!"

And the brave young duke charged the enemy at full gallop, crying out, "Our Lady, Gueldres!" The Brabanters, completely defeated, lost seventeen standards, "and you will find them," says Froissard, "before the image of Our Lady of Nimwegen, that they may serve for a perpetual memorial." After the engagement, the Gueldres men held counsel on the field of battle. Some proposed to go into a neighbouring city to dispose of their prisoners and dress their wounds. "No," said the duke; "I gave and devoted myself to the department of Nimwegen, and I gave and devoted myself this day, at the beginning of the battle, to Our Lady of Nimwegen; I will and command that we return thither, and go to visit and thank *the Lady* who has helped us to gain the victory."

And he set off *full gallop*, with his knights, to offer to Our Lady his thanks, and to hang up his armour, hacked and broken, as an *ex voto* in her chapel.[1]

In 1363, King Louis I., of Hungary, finding himself with twenty thousand men, before eighty thousand infidels, dedicated himself, with his whole army, to the Queen of angels, whose image he always kept about him. To thank Our Lady for the brilliant victory which he gained, he caused to be built, enclosing the chapel of Affluez in Carinthia, a very fine church, where he

(1) Froissard, t. i. p. 112.

deposited the holy image, to which he attributed his victory, and the sword with which he had fought.[1]

In the fourteenth century, Louis, Duke of Bourbon, surnamed the Great, resolved to leave France for a time, which was desolated by the troubles of the minority of Charles VI., to repress the audacious piracies of the Saracens of Africa, which threatened to annihilate the maritime commerce of Europe. Genoa, and the ports on the French coast, implored an expedition against these pirates; Louis of Bourbon listened to this appeal, and resolved to make a crusade in that direction in honour of the Blessed Virgin, whom he held in supreme veneration. He assembled his vassals, and the king's noble knights, who were joined by the Dauphin d'Auvergne, John of Beaufort, son of the Duke of Lancaster, the Count d'Harcourt, Gautier de Châtillon, William of Hainaut, Philip of Artois, Count d'Eu, the Sire of la Tremouille, and Messire Philip de Bar. All these warriors, before they set sail, solemnly devoted themselves to the Blessed Virgin, and took for the admiral's flag the banner of the Duke of Bourbon, "which at that time was all covered with French fleurs de lys, with a white figure of Our Lady, the Mother of Jesus Christ, seated and represented in the middle; the escutcheon of Bourbon was beneath the feet of the said figure."[2]

The Duke of Bourbon set sail with a fleet of eighty vessels, which went to "sea in fine order, under the care of God, of Our Lady, and St. George." They disembarked in the middle of summer before a city which Froissard and Christina of Pisan call Africa, and which is believed to have been Tunis. The crusaders of the Blessed Virgin undertook the siege of this place, which they attempted four times to take by assault without success, the Turks offering a vigorous resistance. The arrival of

(1) This Carinthian church, now known by the name of Maria Zell, is still one of the most celebrated pilgrimages of Catholic Germany. The Emperor Mathias came there to return thanks for a victory gained over the Turks in 1601; Ferdinand III. finished the church as we see it at present, and Maria Teresa made her first communion there, in the year 1728.

(2) Froissard, t. xi. p. 266.

the Christians had been the signal for a holy war to the Mussulmans of Africa; the kings of Bugia, Tripoli, and Morocco sent their troops to succour the besieged city, and the Christians had to defend themselves from ambuscades and surprises in the night from the barbarians. But these stratagems were frustrated, without the aid of sentinels or watchmen, in a manner for which the whole army of Mary did homage to its divine Protectress. A mastiff who had no known master, kept so good guard every night around the Christian camp, that it was impossible for the Turks to elude his wonderful vigilance. The soldiers, seeing something extraordinary in the infallible instinct of this animal, had called him *Our Lady's Dog*.

This expedition to Africa, undertaken under the auspices of the Blessed Virgin, was accompanied with prodigies, according to Froissard; he relates that "the Saracens, seeking to surprise the French by an attack in the night, were approaching very silently to the camp of the Christians when they perceived before them a company of ladies all in white, and particularly one at their head, who was much more beautiful than all the others, and carried before her a white banner with a red cross. At this sight the Saracens were so frightened, that for the time they had neither power nor courage to advance."[1]

Whether Mary was pleased to protect the chivalry of France, who marched under her banner, by placing herself with her celestial attendants between the Christians and the Mussulmans, or whether an hallucination caused by the indistinct light of the stars and the floating banners of the knights was the sole cause of the prodigy, the camp was equally preserved from a nocturnal surprise.

The excessive heat of the climate and a pestilential epidemic decimated the Christian army, who were thinking of raising the siege of Tunis after nine weeks of fruitless attempts; but before they retired, they twice gave battle to the Saracens, and these, in spite of their number, were defeated; the banner of Mary was

(1) Froissard, t. xi. p. 266.

gloriously borne by the chivalry of France, and the Christians performed such prodigies of valour under this standard, that the King of Tunis was terrified, and thought himself too happy to conclude a treaty, by which he engaged to give up the Christian slaves, no more to disturb the navigation of the Mediterranean, and, finally, to pay ten thousand gold besants for the expenses of the war.

The good cities of the kingdom, in times of calamity, placed themselves under the special protection of the Blessed Virgin, as well as the sovereigns.

In 1357, after that fatal battle of Poictiers, which mowed down the flower of the French nobility, and where the king was taken by the English, the provost of the merchants made a vow, in the name of the city of Paris, to present every year to the Mother of God, in the cathedral church, a wax-taper as long as the circumference of the walls of the city. The offering actually took place till the time of the League, when it was interrupted for twenty-five or thirty years. In 1605, there was substituted for this long, rolled up bougie a silver lamp with a thick wax-candle, which burnt continually before the altar of Notre Dame till 1789.[1]

Rouen—where the image of Mary formerly adorned all the squares, all the places where streets met, all the fountains, and all the public monuments—placed itself, by a solemn vow, under her protection in 1348, on the appearance of that black pestilence which had ravaged the globe, and which struck its victims so violently that people died, say the contemporary chronicles, as they looked at each other. When the intercession of the Blessed Virgin had put a stop to this frightful scourge, there was founded

(1) Sauval, Mem. MS. There is still to be found among the accounts of receipts and expenses of the domain of Paris, in the year 1488, an item concerning this taper:—"A la vefve Gerbelot la somme de 27 livres 19 solz 8 deniers, a elle pareillement dus par laditte ville, pour 117 livres et demie de cire ouvrée en une grande chandelle assise sur ung tour de bois, par elle baillée et livrée le 12 febvrier, au prix de 4 solz 8 deniers la livre: somme de la chandelle de Nostre Dame, 53 livres 11 solz 8 deniers."

in the Norman cathedral one of the most magnificent chapels in the world, dedicated to Our Lady of the Vow. The statue of Mary, in white marble, crowned with white roses, stood on the altar erected to her by the gratitude of the public, and the magistrates of Rouen hung above this holy image a massive lamp of gold, which was kept burning, night and day, till the sixteenth century, when the Protestants extinguished it.[1]

The cities of France were not the only ones which consecrated themselves to the Blessed Virgin: Genoa the Superb had written upon its gates, *Citta di Maria;* and Venice the Fair had adorned the hall of her great council, in 1385, with a magnificent piece of tapestry by Guariotto, a disciple of Giotto, representing Christ crowning the Blessed Virgin *Queen* of Venice. Below this picture, which perished some centuries ago, were inscribed these four lines of Dante:—

> "L'amor che mosse già l'eterno padre
> Per figlia aver di sua Deita trina,
> Costei che fa del Figlio suo poi Madre
> Dell' universo qui la fa regina."

The doges of Venice were obliged to leave to the lords a picture in which they were painted kneeling before the Blessed Virgin, that they might remember that she was their sovereign and that of the republic.[2]

This devotion of Genoa and Venice to the Mother of God was eclipsed by the ardent devotion rendered to her by the little republic of Parma, which had also dedicated itself to Mary. The Parmesans had no more solemn day than the 15th of August, the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, patroness of their cathedral and sovereign of their republic. This feast with them was on a par with Easter Sunday, and was so highly reverenced, that the Holy See, when laying Parma under an interdict, always excepted the day of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin.

(1) Amiot., Hist. de la ville de Rouen, t. ii.
(2) Delices de l'Italie, t. i. p. 60.

On that day the heads of families, followed by all the members of their houses, repaired to the superb cathedral of Mary (the ceiling of which was painted a little later by Correggio), with banners unfurled, and singing hymns, and laid flowers and presents upon her altar; any inhabitant of Parma who should have neglected to appear in the cathedral would have lost his character, says Turchi, and been pointed at with scorn. At this solemn feast, when all ranks were mixed together, there existed no longer any distinction or pre-eminence; they might have been called one family uniting joyfully to celebrate the feast of their mother.

Assuredly, that is an ardent and sincere devotion which can stifle the hatred of party feelings! That of the Parmesans went even so far as that. In the year 1323, on the day of the Assumption, the Guelphs, who were banished from Parma, putting away their old enmities, presented themselves under the walls of the city, with their hands joined, and begged to be allowed to enter for the sake of the Blessed Virgin. The population of the city, at this name of Mary, humbly invoked on the day of her solemn festival, felt moved with compassion, and by a spontaneous movement each one ran to open the gates; Guelphs and Ghibelines embraced each other, shedding tears of joy, and they conducted the exiles, amid shouts of *evviva!* from the citizens, to the celebrated cathedral of Our Lady, where they swore peace, on the altar of the Blessed Virgin. This peace lasted fifty years.[1]

To appease these violent factions of the Guelphs and Ghibelines, who divided the cities of Italy into two camps, and made battle-fields of their streets and their public places, nothing better could have been imagined than to create an order of knighthood of a character entirely pacific, the *Frati Gaudenti*, or knights of the Blessed Virgin, who, without renouncing the world, employed themselves in restoring, in the name and to the honour

(1) Chronic. Parm. in med. ann. 1323; Chronic. Parm. apud Murator., 10, Rer.

of the Mother of God, peace and concord in the Italian peninsula.

This devotion to Mary, which brought back peace to cities, and inspired warriors with courage, was the soul of the military orders, those great armies of the middle ages, ever triumphant, who relied for the most part, and performed their prodigies upon the faith of the Mother of God. In this religious and austere division of chivalry, the absence of lady love was represented by a particular devotion to the Blessed Virgin; thus the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem invoked Mary on receiving their swords,—an invocation which the Knights of Malta, the latest form of this celebrated order, still perform. The Teutonic knights took the name of *Knights of the Virgin;*[1] the lands which they conquered from the pagans of the north of Europe they called *lands of Mary;* the Blessed Virgin was their heavenly Lady; and, in truth, she was then the *Lady of the whole world*, as it is expressed in the simple legends of the middle ages. These orders, subject to a powerful organization, which partook of the discipline of a camp, and the severity of a monastic rule, conquered provinces in the name of Mary, which they united together to form into kingdoms. The order of the Teutonic knights became, as is well known, the monarchy of Prussia; and under the name of Knights of Rhodes, the Hospitallers reigned over one of the finest islands of the Levant. To these religious and chivalrous orders, which extended the veneration of Mary by miracles of bravery, came to be added the royal orders, of which Mary was also in general the patroness. It was in her honour that King John founded the order of knights of Our Lady of the Noble House, better known under the name of Knights of the Star. These knights fasted every Saturday, when they could, and when they could not, they were to give to the poor fifteen Parisian pence, in memory of the *fifteen joys* of Our Lady. They were allowed to hoist a standard

(1) In 1191 the pope approved of the institution of these knights, under the title of Brothers Hospitallers of the Blessed Virgin, and placed them under the rule of St. Augustin.

ornamented with stars, with a figure of the Blessed Virgin, either to make war upon the enemies of the faith, or for the service of their liege lord. They swore die to rather than surrender, and not to fly farther than the distance of four French acres, when the superiority of numbers should force them to retreat.

Charles VI., that poor prince, whose precocious valour had gained, when he was fourteen years old, that famous victory of Rosbecq, "which greatly incensed the English, who would raise up envy, even if it were dead," at least according to Messire John Froissard,[1] instituted likewise, during the first years of his reign, an order of knighthood in honour of the Blessed Virgin, in consequence of a vow which he had made in Languedoc. During his abode at Toulouse, he often hunted with Oliver de Clisson, Peter of Navarre, and a number of lords of his court, in the ancient forest of Bouconne. One day when he had separated from his retinue, pursuing a wild beast with too much eagerness, the night overtook him in the midst of wild heaths, pathless solitudes, and great woods full of bears and wild boars of the old druidical forest; to add to the dangers of his situation, the darkness grew thicker and thicker, and a clouded sky hid the stars. Terrified at his isolation, not knowing what direction to follow, the prince makes a solemn vow to Our Lady of Hope, and humbly places himself under her protection. A light breeze at once disperses the clouds, and a bright star casts its grey pearly rays upon a beaten path, which leads the young monarch out of the forest. The next day, Charles, followed by his lords com-

(1) "On dit en un commun proverbe, et voir (vrai) est, que oncques envie ne mourut. Je le ramentoy (rappelle) pourtant (attendu) que, par nature, Anglois sont trop envieux sur le bien d'autruie et ont toujours esté. Sachez que le roi d'Angleterre, et ses oncles, et les nobles d'Angleterre, estoient durement courroucés du bien et de l'honneur qui estoient advenus au roi de France et aux nobles de France a la bataille de Rosebecque; et disoient en Angleterre les chevaliers quand ils en parloient ensemble, 'Ha! Sainte Marie! que ces François font maintenant de fumée pour un mont de vilains qu'ils ont rués jus! Plust a Dieu que ce Philippe d'Arteville eust eu des nostres deux mille homme et six mille archers; il n'eu fust ja pied echappé de ces François que tous ne fussent ou mort ou pris.'"

pletely armed except their heads, comes to fulfil his vow at the chapel of Mary. To perpetuate the memory of his perilous adventure, he founded, a short time after, the Order of Our Lady of Hope, and would have a star for its symbol.[1]

In the year 1370, Louis II., Duke of Bourbon, instituted the Order of Knights of the Thistle, of Our Lady. This order was composed of twenty-six knights, who wore a blue velvet girdle embroidered with gold, with the word *Hope* in similar embroidery; the buckle of fine gold bore, *in green enamel*, the head of a thistle. On the day of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady, which was the grand festival of the order, the knights of the Thistle wore a sumptuous robe of pink damask, and a mantle of sky blue, embroidered with gold, over which they wore the grand collar of the order, composed of lozenges and fleurs-de-lis of gold, with the word *Hope* upon each lozenge. From the end of the collar hung an oval medallion with the figure of Mary, below which was seen the head of a thistle, in green enamel, *relieved with white.*[2]

Devout and chivalrous Spain had also, in the middle ages, royal orders founded in honour of Mary. Alphonsus, or rather Don Alonso the Wise, founded an order of knighthood, which he placed under the protection of the Blessed Virgin, and Don James II., King of Arragon, to reward the bravery of the inhabitants of Montesa, whose castle, built upon the summit of a high mountain, had many times heroically resisted the Moors, founded in 1319 an order of knighthood under the title of *Sancta*

(1) The institution of Our Lady of Good Hope is proved by an ancient painting which is seen on the wall of the cloister of the Carmelites of Toulouse, near the chapel of Our Lady of Hope, where the king of France is represented on horseback, bowing before an image of the Blessed Virgin; some lords are also painted there in full armour, except on their heads. Their names, written underneath, are almost effaced; but there may still be read those of the Duke of Touraine, the Duke of Bourbon, of Peter de Navarre, of Henry de Bar, and Oliver de Clisson. All these personages are painted of the size of life. The background of this painting is filled with wolves, wild boars, &c. At the top, on a sort of frieze, are angels bearing scrolls, on which is written thrice the word *Hope*. (Dom. Vaissette, Hist. du Languedoc, t. iv. p. 396.)

(2) Favin, Hist. de Navarre, liv. viii.

Maria de Montesa, to which he generously gave, with the consent of the pope, the possessions of the suppressed order of the Templars in the kingdom of Valencia.

A little later, about the middle of the fifteenth century, Christian I., King of Denmark, founded, in honour of the Holy Trinity and the Blessed Virgin, the royal Order of the Elephant, the members of which undertook various pious engagements, particularly that of defending the Catholic faith at the peril of their lives; the elephant was the symbol of the virtues of the order.

The royal and military orders were not the only ones to take Mary for their patroness: the religious soldiery, who gain battles by prayer under the shield of faith, would also march under the banner of the Blessed Virgin, and distinguished themselves by heroism of a different kind. In the West, the first religious order especially founded in honour of Mary was that of Citeaux, which acknowledges for its founder St. Robert, a young Norman nobleman, destined by his family to the profession of arms, but who preferred gaining the kingdom of heaven before the kingdoms of the earth. In the year 1098 he founded, in a desert place, covered with brambles and thorns, which the Duke of Burgundy had given him, the famous Abbey of Citeaux, and gave the twenty religious who had accompanied him thither, the white habit, in honour of, and, according to the annalists of Citeaux, in consequence of a revelation from, the Blessed Virgin. To merit the protection of Mary, Robert and his religious condemned themselves to a life the most disinterested, most laborious, poor, and austere that could possibly be imagined; they banished from their cloister all that had the least appearance of luxury. Their abbey church had but one cross, and that was of wood; the thuribles and candlesticks were of iron, and the chalices of copper gilt; the vestments were of coarse stuff; the abbot's crosier was merely the crutched staff used at that time by old men. To avoid whatever might hinder them from retreat and recollection of spirit, they agreed not to allow any prince or nobleman from that time to hold his court in their church or monas-

tery, as they were accustomed to do on great festivals. These regulations were made only by degrees. The greater part are from the abbot Stephen, who had succeeded Alberic, the successor of Robert, in 1109. The monastery suffered so great want in the year following, that the abbot was obliged to go and beg alms, mounted on an ass, accompanied by a brother. The rigours which they practised caused Citeaux to be deserted; no one offered to replace the religious who died, and the abbot began seriously to fear that this new institute would perish in its cradle; but Mary, who protected it, would not permit this, and made it a magnificent present in the person of St. Bernard, who retired thither with several of his relations in 1113. He was hardly seventeen years old; at nineteen he was sent to Clairvaux as abbot, and set about cultivating this place, which was covered with thickets. While St. Bernard was laying the foundations of Clairvaux, La Ferté, Pontigny, and Morimond, which are the three other filiations from Citeaux, were filling by the favour of the Blessed Virgin. The wild place where arose the Abbey of Morimond, the most austere of all the Cistercian abbeys, was a pious donation of Olderic of Grammont and Adeline his wife, nobles of Choiseul.[1] These four abbeys were the first and the mothers of several others, into the details of which we shall not enter, all equally austere and regular, all worthy of the heavenly protection of their Patroness. The religious went to labour in the woods and fields, sowed seed, reaped wheat, mowed the meadows, cut down trees, and carried them on their backs. When they returned to the convent, they received with thankfulness what was given them to eat, that is, a pound of coarse brown bread mixed with tares, with pottage made of beech leaves. Their bed was of straw, their bolster, a sack of oat-hulls; and after some hours of rest, they rose again at midnight, to sing the praises of the Lord. Such was the pious life of these monks of the Blessed Virgin, whom their conduct honoured, according to the expression which God himself employs in the sacred

(1) Annales Cistercienses, by R. P. Manrique, ann. 1115, c. 1.

Scriptures; and accordingly she condescended to give them sensible testimonies of her favour. The annals of Citeaux record that when these good religious, whose lives were so austere, whose heart was so pure, and hands so occupied, sweated under the burthen of the day, during the harvest, without daring to indulge their extreme thirst with the water of the neighbouring spring, and their limbs, languid with the burning heat of summer, with the delicious coolness of the secular woods which bordered on their cultivated lands, the Blessed Virgin wiped off with her white veil the sweat of labour from the pale and furrowed brow of the brethren.[1]

Men of high birth flocked to Citeaux: Prince Henry, brother of Louis the Young, became a monk at Clairvaux in the year 1149; St. Malachy, who was descended from the kings of Ireland, and who was primate of that island, exchanged his pontifical vestments for the poor ornaments of serge and fustian of the religious of the Blessed Virgin; Wallen, one of the first lords of the court of Scotland, dear to the king, his relative, who invited him to all his hunting parties, abandoned the world and its pomps, which smiled upon him, to shut himself up in a monastery of Citeaux. The king having often perceived that the young nobleman, instead of hunting the black game of the heath and the roebucks, retired apart among the tall fern or under the whitethorns in the thickets to read and pray,—"I must make him a bishop," said the pious monarch one day, looking thoughtfully. Wallen anticipated him, and became a monk at Wardon.

In 1129, Everard, Count of Mans, abdicated his crown as sovereign prince for the cowl of Citeaux. He went and presented himself in disguise at one of the abbeys of the order, and he was entrusted with the care of the flocks of the monastery; he would have remained always unknown there, if certain lords had not recognised him feeding sheep on the border of a heath. Another young lord of very high birth, having taken the habit of Citeaux, was ordered to take a troop of swine every day under the oaks of

(1) Annales Cistercienses, ad ann. 1199, c. 5, et 1228, c. 6; ann. 1121, c. 6.

a neighbouring forest, who enjoyed their feed upon acorns and beech-nuts. One day, when the novice was not engaged in prayer, he heard the voice of Satan, the father of pride, who whispered to him in a low voice that he was following a very strange occupation for the son of a powerful baron. This young nobleman, so pious up to that time, bit his lips, and his fervour disappeared; when evening was come, he went back to the monastery, and retired to the chapel. Whoever might have seen him on his knees before the altar of Our Lady, plunged in deep meditation, would have said, "Here is a saint, whose thoughts are in heaven." Yet his thoughts had not taken so lofty a flight, for he was thinking of his father's castle, and cherishing thoughts of flight. "The night is very dark," said the novice to himself, as he looked out beyond the porch of the chapel; "the wind is blowing a tempest: it is the very time to make my escape. . . . . To keep swine indeed! let us be off then! the son of one of the first lords of the court;—but it is disgraceful!" . . . . He arose, and walked down the nave with a resolute step; but as he was going to step over the threshold, he perceived a woman standing before him! At first he thought he was dreaming; but no, there was before him, at the bottom of the chapel, a woman beautiful as an angel, and majestic as a queen; with a gracious movement of her hand, and a smile of compassionate pity, she made him a sign to follow her, and was mechanically obeyed. The unknown lady went towards the cemetery, which the moon, half concealed by thick clouds, lighted with a strange kind of light; the large yew-trees, darkly agitated by the wind, seemed to moan over the dead, and the night-birds mingled their mournful cries with the tumult of the tempest. An icy shivering began to seize the limbs of the young monk; his fair and calm conductress stretched out her hand, and behold the turfy coverings of the tombs slowly opened, and the dead arose, cold and pale in their shrouds. The novice was on the point of fainting away with fear, when the unknown lady, looking at him with an eye of tender compassion, said to him with a sweet and penetrating voice, "Yet a little while, and you will be even as these dead! Whither then

would you wish to go, and what are you thinking of? Here ends the glory of the world!" As she said these words, the Blessed Virgin, for it was she herself, disappeared; the graves closed up again, and the young novice, who no longer dreamed of leaving the convent, became a model of virtue and humility.[1]

The Order of Citeaux, which was spread over every country of Christendom, was suppressed in France at the beginning of the Revolution.

The Order of Fontevrault, founded in 1100, by Robert of Arbricelle, in honour of the holy obedience of Jesus Christ to the orders of Mary, and the sonship of John with regard to Mary, could have arisen only in an age of chivalry. In this order, which had for nuns high and mighty dames, and for abbesses princesses of the blood royal, the women commanded the men, and the abbots would not have dared to consider the abbess as sister, whom in all humility they were bound to call their mother,[2] and who was the absolute sovereign of the order. The foundation of this order stirred up some storms at its beginning: Marbode, Bishop of Rennes, and Godfrey, Bishop of Vendôme, alarmed at the strangeness of this obedience, in an inverse manner declared against Fontevrault; but it subsisted, notwithstanding, till the Revolution. It was in this abbey that the princesses of the blood royal were educated.

Seven merchants of Florence also founded, in the second part of the middle ages, the Order of Servites, or serfs of Mary, which gave to the church of St. Philip Beniti, the author of the moving devotion of the Seven Dolours of the Blessed Virgin. In fine, the sweet name of Mary was attached to the Order of Our Lady of Mercy, destined to ransom Christians who had fallen into slavery among infidels. This order, founded on the 10th of August, 1218, is one of those holy works which do honour to humanity;

(1) Ann. 1207, c. 4.

(2) A decree of the parliament ordered the monks of the Abbey of Fontevrault to call the abbess their mother, and not their sister.—(See the Ann. de Fontevr.)

its rules were extremely severe, and it held a middle position between the military orders and orders purely monastic.

If the other religious orders of chivalrous times were less directly placed under the immediate patronage of the Blessed Virgin than those of which we have spoken, all vied with each other in honouring her, and were grounded on her influence. The ancient Carthusians dedicated to Mary their first chapel, which still subsists in the midst of the rocks where it was originally built, and bears the memorial name of Our Lady of the Cottages.[1]

The cradle of the Order of the Franciscans was a small chapel, very old and very much out of repair, built originally by four solitaries of Palestine, who had given it the name of St. Mary of Josaphat, because there were venerated in it some relics from the sepulchre of the Blessed Virgin.

The Order of Dominicans took its rise at Our Lady of Prouille.

St. Norbert reformed Premontré by order of the Mother of God; and he obliged his religious to say daily the office of the Blessed Virgin, under pain of mortal sin.

FOURTH EPOCH: FROM THE MIDDLE AGES DOWN TO OUR DAYS.

CHAPTER XI.

THE REVIVAL.

At the beginning of the fifteenth century, Catholic Europe was always kneeling before Mary, whose cathedrals, which were now in the hands of the secular clergy, were completed with admi-

(1) Sacellum beatæ Mariæ de Casalibus. This chapel, which the Carthusians have respectfully preserved as the first cradle of their order, still subsists. Tastefully decorated, and hidden in the depth of forests, it has a very pleasing effect.

rable perseverance. A great number of confraternities were then founded in honour of the Blessed Virgin. The German princes put on her scapular, and the kings of England of the red rose were anointed at their coronation with a miraculous oil *shining brighter than fine gold, which the Blessed Virgin Mary had given expressly for them* to St. Thomas à Becket during his exile.[1]

The students of those great colleges, where so many free foundations were made in the name of Our Lady, rose at day-break, to say together the office of the Blessed Virgin; even the princes, not excepting the reigning prince, recited it also, at fixed hours, with certain other offices of the church. A small place set apart in their apartments, and much resembling the domestic chapels of the Romans, was specially dedicated to these morning devotions. The Duke of Orleans, uncle of Charles VI., whose life was far from being edifying, had nevertheless, at the Hotel of St. Paul, an oratory enriched with Gothic sculptures of Irish wood, on the door of which were to be read these words:—" Retreat where Monsieur Louis of France recites his Hours."[2]

At Naples, the feast of Our Lady of Carmel had something chivalrous which was wanting in the festivals of France, and denoted an origin contemporary with the Crusades. The principal spectacle of this *gran festa* was a sort of petty warfare sustained by the young men of the city. A Turkish fortress was erected in the centre of the *Mercato del Carmine;* the crescent glittered upon its ramparts, and it was defended by three or four hundred young men, who, under the name of *Alarbs*, represented a sort of Turkish soldiery. The besiegers of this fort, representing the Neapolitan nation, never failed to conquer the infidels, nor did the people fail to rejoice at a victory, which was the image of the triumph of the cross over the crescent.

The rosary[3] and the chaplet, which the Italians call *corona*,

(1) Boucher, Annales de l'Aquitaine, t. iv. p. 3.

(2) Felib., t. i. p. 654; Sauval, Mem. MS.

(3) The rosary was instituted in the year 1208, by St. Dominic; but he was not exactly the inventor of it. As early as 1094, Peter the Hermit had thought

were worn by the great and the common people, by magistrates and warriors. A valuable chaplet was put into the rich wedding-baskets; and the grand ladies of the age of the revival, as well as those of the middle ages, were often represented on their stone monuments with beads in their hands. This method of prayer, first invented for the poor, had become the prayer of every one. The burgesses and gentlemen said their beads as they went out into the country, or as they returned into the city, the clients at the palace, while they waited for their lawyers, and the Christians of all classes, as they went to gain the *pardons* at distant churches. Kings themselves set the example,—Blanche of Castile said her rosary every day; Edward III. of England gave his beads, enriched with pearls, to Eustace de Ribeaumont, chevalier of France, who had twice overthrown him. In the inventory made after the death of Charles V., says Le Sage, we find ten strings of beads of gold. The Swiss, at Grandson, found under the ducal tent of Charles of Burgundy his *Pater* (beads), on which the apostles were represented in massive gold.[1] It is known that the famous constable Anne of Montmorency always said his beads as he rode at the head of his troops. "Sometimes, leaving a *Pater* unsaid, he commanded some military expedition, or gave the signal for an attack; then he conscientiously told his *Aves*," says an historian of the time, "such was his devotion."

The chaplet, which derives its name from the crowns of flowers which in the middle ages were called *chapels*, or *chapeaux*, was the spiritual crown of Mary; it was said in those days, and it was a graceful and poetical belief, that by every Christian who recited it with attention and fervour an angel placed himself, sometimes visible, who strung on a golden thread a rose for each

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of making beads of wood, upon which the soldiers of the Crusades, who for the most part could not read, recited a certain number of Our Fathers and Hail Marys, which varied according to the solemnity of the feasts. Before him, ancient historians record that devout persons already recited a series of Our Fathers and Hail Marys upon knotted cords—"Per cordulam nodis distinctam."—(Regl. de la confr. du Rosaire; Astolfi; Gabriel Pennotus, in Hist. tripart.)

(1) Hist. de Louis XI., by M. Lisken, p. 91.

Ave, and a golden lily for each *Pater*, and who, after setting this garland on the head of the devout servant of the Blessed Virgin, disappeared, leaving a sweet odour of roses.[1]

The kings of Scotland and their great vassals wore beads of gold to *preserve them from all evil;* the bold cavaliers of the border made themselves plainer ones with nuts gilded by the autumn sun, and never recited them with more fervour, says Leslie, than in their expeditions against the English. The golden beads disappeared with the last Catholic sovereign, poor Queen Mary; but those which the inhabitants of the border gathered in the woods held out for a very long time against the shock of the Reformation. It was the last Catholic practice in Caledonia; with it fell the ancient religion of Bruce, Wallace, and David I., that religion to which Scotland and England were indebted, as the radical Cobbett owns, for all that they have had that was great, either in men or things.

The Georgians and the people of Italy made *coronas* with as little expense as the Scotch; they employed for them the stones of the *azedarah,* which the Italians still call *l'albero dei paternostri.*

The tender and sincere piety of our forefathers towards the Blessed Virgin assumed at that time the sweetest and most affecting forms. Bay leaves borrowed from the shrubs, fruits plucked from the bushes, composed for her a religious garland; flowers, heaths, plants of Europe and Asia were honoured with her name, and brought up the remembrance of her amidst the fields and woods. The narcissus, with its flower edged with purple, received the name of Mary's lily; the rose of Jericho, and Solomon's seal, became her rose and her seal; the lungwort, spotted with white, was Our Lady's milk; the Scot took for his

(1) The chaplet owed its origin to a young religious man of the Order of St. Francis. Previously to taking the habit of the Friars Minors, this young man had the custom of making up, every day, a garland of flowers, with which he crowned the image of Our Lady. Not being able to continue this devout practice in his convent, he was going to leave off the custom, but, as he was thinking of so doing, Our Lady appeared to him, and ordered him to substitute for the crown of flowers the spiritual crown of the chaplet of beads.—(F. Alex. Salo, Meth. ad. pour hon. la V. M., p. 672.)

emblem her blessed thistle; the Christian Arab called a sort of wormwood, with a white flower, which grows upon his sandy downs, St. Mary's smoke; the mountain shepherd distinguished the Alpine mint, the rosemary, and persicaria, by the name of St. Mary's herb; the oriental Mussulmans call the sweet smelling cyclamen, *bokour Miriam* (Mary's perfume), and the same plant bears in Persian the name of *Tchenk Miriam* (Mary's hand); a spring flower of Europe received the name of Our Lady's mantle; the bilberry, with its dark and sweet berries, was her signet; the wild service berries of the Alps were her pears, and the carpets of wild thyme, where the tired bee reposes, had also her name.

In some countries of the north, on the contrary, they scrupulously avoided giving the name of the Virgin, not only to things, but to persons, lest that name should come to be treated with irreverence, or be borne unworthily. Among the Poles no woman was called Mary, and this prohibition extended so far, that Ladislas IV., when he married Mary Louisa of Nevers, would have inserted in the clauses of the contract, that the new queen should drop her name of Mary, which hurt the feelings of the Poles with their respect for the Mother of God, and that she should bear only the name of Louisa.[1]

In the first years of the fourteenth century, Pope Innocent XXII., justly alarmed at the conquests of the Mussulmans, instituted a prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary, under the name of the *Ave Maria;* this prayer, for which the most mysterious and calmest hour of the day had been chosen, that hour when the daylight departs,[2] was said in France and England at the first toll of the curfew bell. All Catholics then said three Hail Marys for the success of the arms of the Christians, and begged

(1) Dovendo Ladislao IV. prendere per moglie la figliuola del duca di Nevers, chiamata Maria Aloisa, messe questa special condizione che la reina, par riverenza della Vergine, si chiamasse nell 'avenire solamente Aloisa.—(Il P. Paolo Segneri, t. vii. p. 571.)

(2) Polidore Virgil attributes the institution of the *Ave Maria* in the evening to Pope John XXII., and that in the morning to Theodoric, Archbishop of Cologne.

of the Blessed Virgin that there might be peace, union, and prosperity in the several kingdoms subject to the faith. Louis XI., in 1475, instituted the *Angelus*, the same as now in use, in honour of the mystery of the Incarnation; and it was his wish that to the evening prayer, which was made for the general peace of Christendom, there should be added one, at noon, for the particular peace of his own kingdom. His decree is in these words: "It is commanded that all Frenchmen, knights, soldiers, and countrymen shall *kneel down*, on both knees, at the sound of the bell at noon, shall devoutly make the sign of the cross, and make a prayer to Our Lady to obtain good peace."

The decree was obeyed with a degree of exactitude, which proves to what extent devotion to Mary was popular. During the fifteenth century, at the first sound of the *Angelus*, in houses, in the streets, in the fields and on the roads, there was not a Frenchman who did not fall prostrate to pray to the Blessed Virgin. This duty fulfilled, passers-by and travellers rose up again, and went on their way.[1]

At those processions, so long in extent that the head of them was at St. Denis, while the last ranks still trod the threshold of Notre Dame,[2] the mohair banner of the Blessed Virgin Mary, worked with gold, was borne aloft above all the sacred banners, and went immediately after the cross. Kings, queens, bishops, honourable men of the higher ranks of citizens were associates in the confraternity of Notre Dame,[3] and there were seen in these pious gatherings, the hoods of princes embroidered with gold, mingled with the parti-coloured hoods of red and blue of the burgesses of Paris.

At every corner of the streets, a little statue of Mary, rudely

(1) Alexis Monteil, Vie privée des Français, t. i.

(2) Capef., Hist. de la Ref.

(3) This confraternity, the most ancient of those of Our Lady of Paris, was established in 1168. It was called La Grande Confrerie de Nostre Dame aux seigneurs, prestres et bourgeois de Paris. The king, queen, and bishop of Paris belonged to it, and in the three orders of this confraternity they received only the best qualified persons.—(Le Maire, t. ii. p. 79; Traité de la Police, t. i. p. 372.)

carved of oak, blackened by time, and covered with a veil of antique lace, raised its head above a bunch of flowers, which some pious souls of the neighbourhood renewed every morning, at the hour when the trumpets sounded the morning call from the top of the towers of Châtelet.[1] Oftentimes those flowers, secretly deposited before daylight, were taken for the gifts of angels, who came, it was said, to teach Christians how to honour their Queen. During the night, lamps burned continually in these little gray niches, which on Saturdays were completely illuminated.[2] This was the first beginning of lighting the streets. This lighting, less brilliant, no doubt, than what is in use now, had nevertheless a great advantage over ours: there was associated with it a pious thought, calculated to make a believing people reflect; the mystic lamps of the Madonnas, shining in succession like a light row of stars, through the odoriferous heads of flowers, seemed to say to the vagabond who went about by night for evil purposes: There is an eye over this slumbering city which never closes, and which watches over these deserted and silent streets—*the eye of God.*[3]

These little Madonnas of the street corners, though less ornamental than those which figured in massive silver on altars of marble and gold, were no less cherished by the inhabitants. Young people came in procession to them from all quarters, barefooted and crowned with flowers, singing the Litany of the Blessed Virgin; every one followed them, whatever weather it was, and the crowd was sometimes so great, that people could hardly pass in the street. A small image of cedar, a foot high, which had belonged to the house of Joyeuse, and which figured between two pointed turrets, over the gate of the reverend Father

(1) Alex. Monteil, t. i.

(2) Hist. de Notre Dame de la Paix, par le P. Medard, Capucin.

(3) This is still the only mode of lighting many towns in Italy. The following is what was written of it in 1803:—"Il popolo è devoto alle Madonne, per cui ve ne sono in ogni angollo delle strade con fanali accesi di notte. Essi tengono illuminate le strade, e cosi la *divozione supplisce* alla polizia."—(Descrizione di Napoli, p. 269.)

Capuchins of the Rue St. Honoré, was near being the occasion of a small civil war between two divisions of Paris. Some persons, a little more zealous than became them, wanted to carry off the miraculous Madonna to decorate their own parish. The news of this came to the ears of the burgesses of the district, who at once took up arms, mounted guard, night and day, before the tutelary Virgin, and were near fixing chains across the streets. Tranquillity was not restored till after the pompous translation of the holy image into the church itself of the convent.[1]

The Queen of Heaven, who inspired the armies of the middle ages with the confident hope of victory, reigned over the fleets and merchant-vessels of this fifteenth century, which was rightly called the age of discoveries. Christopher Columbus undertook the discovery of the new world under the auspices of the Blessed Virgin, whose Hours he used to recite on board his vessel, in a precious manuscript which Pope Alexander VI. had given him at his departure, and which he bequeathed at his death to the republic of Genoa. Don Henry of Portugal, who presided and concurred in the discovery of the Indies, erected at Belem a church of Our Lady, accompanied by an hospital for the seamen of his own country. John Gonsalves Zares, his first and ablest navigator, had a church built in honour of Our Lady, at Madeira. When the Portuguese, under the command of Vasquez de Gama, landed for the first time on the coast of Coromandel, where they believed, on the faith of some ancient accounts of voyages, that they should find Christians of St. Thomas, they allowed themselves to be taken by the inhabitants into the temple of a goddess of the Indies, which they had the simplicity, in spite of its four arms and long golden ears, to take for the Blessed Virgin Mary, and before which they prayed accordingly. One of them, however, had some doubts, and called out aloud, as he looked at the idol, whose hideous features reminded him of anything but the fair and sweet Virgin of the Christians: "If the devil is adored here, which is very possible, it is well under-

(1) See Hist. de Notre Dame de la Paix.

stood that our prayers are addressed only to the Mother of God!"

After they were established in India, the Portuguese, faithful to their devotion to Mary, dedicated to her, at Goa, a superb church, gilt all over in the inside, Our Lady *d'Asara*, or of Mercy; several other churches, such as Our Lady of Cranganor, and of Meliapoor, were built, by their care, in divers places of India, and as far as the mouth of the Ganges, the sacred river of Hindostan. It was at that time a pious custom among them to come and make an offering to Mary of the tithe of the booty taken from the idolaters, and this custom occasioned a number of private chapels to be built in her honour. Even in our days, their vessels never pass within sight of the chapels of the Blessed Virgin, situated on the coasts of their superb Macao, without saluting them by firing all their guns.[1] The Spaniards, who were no less devout than the Portuguese to the divine Mother of our Saviour, had upon their galleons, laden with ingots of gold, her statue of massive silver, before which prayed, night and morning, the adventurous Castilian sailors of Isabella, the Catholic. At a period a little nearer to our own times, the filibusters of the island of Tortosa, having taken one of these images in a sea-fight, the Spaniards, despoiled of all that they possessed, thought only of recovering their revered Madonna. The governor-general entered into a negotiation with the pirates, solely to save the *Santa Señora* from the profanations to which she was exposed among those pirates, who affected to live without faith or law; but they refused to give up the statue.

The Blessed Virgin, who gave animation to the arts, ever watched over the conservation of empires, and the sweet Queen of Heaven had also for her vassals the kings of Catholic Europe in general, and those of France in particular. In 1478, King Louis XI. separated from Artois the county of Boulogne, and transferred it to the Blessed Virgin Mary, whom he declared Countess of the Boulonnais. As the feudal charge, he laid upon

(1) Annales de la Propagation de la Foi.

her altar a golden heart, weighing thirteen marks, and engaged that his successors on the throne should be bound to renew the homage and offering to the Virgin, as Lady paramount. It is well known that this cruel but clever prince, disdaining all ostentation, so far as to give in to the opposite extreme, wore no other ornament in his solemn audiences than a small leaden image of the Blessed Virgin in his royal hat. He used to say that he valued that little piece of lead more than all the gold in his kingdom.

He was interred, according to his own directions, at Notre Dame de Clery. He was so determined on this, that Pope Sixtus IV., at his request, forbade, under pain of excommunication, the removal of his body to any other place of burial.

Ann of Britanny, who was twice queen of France, built chapels in honour of the Blessed Virgin, and directed that her scapular should be deposited in the gold box which was to enclose her heart, which she sent back to the Bretons. The mausoleum of Francis II., the last duke of Britanny, having been opened in the year 1727, there was found in the vault, between the coffin of that prince, and that of Margaret de Foix, a small leaden case, in which was a gold box in the shape of a heart, surmounted by a royal crown, and encircled with the order of the Cordeliers, of elaborate workmanship. This box, which had contained the heart of the queen Ann, containing nothing then but a little moisture, and the remains of the scapular, which the pious princess had worn in honour of Mary.

Francis I. having heard that a Huguenot had had the audacity to strike off, even in the middle of Paris, the head of an image of Our Lady, made a solemn act of reparation, bare-footed and bare-headed, and holding a wax taper in his hand. The lords of the court, and the members of the parliament, followed the monarch in procession, who replaced with his own hands, upon the altar where the mutilation had taken place, a magnificent statue of the Blessed Virgin.[1]

(1) F. de Barry, Paradis, &c.

In Spain, the work begun by Pelayo, under the auspices of Mary, to deliver the peninsular from the Moors, had been completed by the capture of Grenada; the first cry of the war of Spanish independence had been "Mary!" in the cavern of Covadonga; this last victory was gained under her banner by Ferdinand the Catholic, who had engraved in gold, upon his good Toledo blade, the protecting figure of Our Lady, and inscribed upon his colours, *Ave Maria.*

CHAPTER XII.

THE LATTER HERESIES.

In the desert land of Caramania, near the Persian Gulf, there exists a shrub, which the Persians call *gul bâd samour* (flower which poisons the wind). Heresy had broken out in frigid Germany, like that poisonous flower, which imparts to the hot breezes of the Persian summer a quality so deadly, that they kill those who inhale them; only the fatal breath, which came from the German lands, began by killing souls, and it killed them by thousands. Then it was that the bright and charming light of the beautiful star which so softly reflected over the Christian world the ardent rays of the increated Sun, became darkened amid the thick mists which the night of error extended over the northern heaven, and underwent a sensible diminution even in those countries of the faithful which it continued to enlighten.

The sectarians of the sixteenth century were let loose with violence against the representations of Mary and the saints; the patrician sect of Luther, it is in justice due to it to say, showed some moderation in this respect;[1] but the fury of the Calvinists

(1) Those of the confession of Augsburg honour the saints with hymns, images, and festivals; but they do not consider that we ought to invoke them. Stuyter, a

exceeds all that could be imagined. Enemies to learning and art, as well as to Catholicism, disguising a furious radicalism beneath the mask of religion, attacking by incendiary pamphlets, sometimes the pope, and sometimes the prince, this small minority, which used violent efforts to force its belief and dogmas upon the immense majority of the French, who were averse to them, covered France with ruins and funerals. "These *good* reformers," says a Count of Lyons, an eye-witness of their violent proceedings, "*began by reforming the public repose and tranquillity.*" At Tours, Blois, Poictiers, Bourges, and Rouen, they completely pillaged the churches, mutilated the figures of the saints, and dragged the images of the Blessed Virgin and of CHRIST in the mire, singing the *Litanies* in derision.[1] In Gascony they shut up the Catholics alive, cut the children in two, cut open priests, and tore out their bowels. Even the dead were not respected in the dust of their tombs: the Huguenots dragged Louis XI. out of his sepulchre, burned what the worms had respected, and dared to scatter to the wind the ashes of a king of France, whose race filled the throne. The fathers and ancestors of the kings of Navarre, and the princes of Condé were not better treated than Louis XI.; the tombs of the house of Angoulême (the reigning house) shared the same fate. The lords of Longueville, snatched half-consumed from their sepulchres, were thrown to the dogs.[2]

The Madonnas, before which so many successive generations had prayed, the crucifixes, which place before our eyes the sufferings of our Redeemer, the pictures, which elevate our souls, reminding us of the self-denial of the cenobites, or the courage of the martyrs, were mutilated with sabre cuts, lacerated or dragged in the mud, with a cord round their necks. But it was not enough for these new barbarians to break the statues, mosaics,

minister of Eibergen, has written a very fine poem on the privileges and virtues of the holy Mother of God. It is not so with other sectaries, who despise the Blessed Virgin, or consider her only as like other women.—(Du culte des Saints et de la Sainte Vierge, by the Bishop of Castoria, pp. 2 and 3.)

(1) Archiv. curieus, l'Hist. de France; Capefigue; Astolfi.

(2) Archiv. curieus, &c.; Capef., Hist. de la Ref.

and bas-reliefs, and to destroy, in a few hours, the slow work of centuries; they even pulled down the churches, after despoiling them of all that could bring to the minds of the faithful religious recollections.

The Count Canon Saconay, who lived within a little of the Huguenots, of whom at that time there was little good to be told, has left us an account of their grand doings in the churches of Lyons: "One of their principal preachers," says he, "Ruffi, with a two-edged sword, which he held, when he preached, like St. Paul in a picture, came with his satellites into the great church of St. John, where he made them strike and knock off the image of a crucifix of great height, which was in the middle of the said church, partly made of silver, and the rest plated with silver; and when it was on the ground, Ruffi rushed furiously upon it, setting both his feet upon the head; and seeing some of his soldiers and ministers coming nearer to the silver than he liked, lest they should *be defiled*, drew his great sword, and brandished it five or six times, 'What,' said he, 'shall I not be respected? Shall any one destroy this great idol before me?' Saying this, he cut off the head of the said representation of Jesus crucified, and held it up, and exhibited it, saying, 'Here is the head of the idol!' Nevertheless, *as it was silver, he took care not to part with it.*

"The small thieves would also share the booty; they scraped the images of gold or silver to get off some fragments before they handed them to the great thieves. They carried off the wing of an angel, the arm of a saint, the head of the Blessed Virgin, &c. They melted down a crucifix of massive silver, which was in the church of St. Stephen, saying in derision, that the poor crucifix had been long cold from being naked, but that they would warm it so well, as to keep off the cold for the future. They also melted down the copes, and other vestments of the altars which were embossed with gold, and could make no great profit by what was worth more than ten thousand crowns. Here then is a Gospel very hot and very ardent! . . . ."

At Coutances, the Huguenots put the inhabitants to the sword, and set fire to every quarter of the city. "The rage of these

infernal vermin," says the historian Rouault, "still more increased in the cathedral; they broke the images, burned the relics, trampled under foot the Blessed Sacrament, and it was by a kind of miracle, and visible protection of the Blessed Virgin, that the church, of which she is the patroness, was not entirely pulled down." [1]

The hermitages, whose small secular bells used to invite the traveller who was late on the road, by promising him, in the name of the Blessed Virgin, a lodging for the night, a frugal repast and a hospitable welcome, were demolished by the Calvinists, who had the barbarity to *shoe* the pious old men who dwelt in them, like their cavalry horses.[2]

The priests fled with the relics, crucifixes and statues of Our Lady, as at the time of the invasion by the Norman pirates; one of them went to hide the image of Our Lady of Beth-Aram, which shepherds had formerly found in the woods, in the heart of Galicia, where it still remains.[3]

Certain Spanish Jesuits, destined for the infant missions of Peru and Paraguay, that is, for a work for which ancient Greece would have erected statues of them as benefactors to human nature, fell in with the Protestant fleet of the Queen of Navarre, off the Canary Isles, which captured their peaceful vessel. After being treated with the greatest insolence by the people of Navarre, the poor religious, all men of courage and merit, were cast into the sea with a small statue of Our Lady, which was hung, in a spirit of irony, round the neck of their principal. They died like old Castilians, without receding a single step, without changing countenance, without uttering complaints or reproaches. Their black gowns, inflated for a moment upon the waters, slowly went down, one after the other, beneath the waves, and the ocean closed over the bodies of thirty martyrs.[4]

(1) Histoire des evêques de Coutances, by Rouault, p. 310.

(2) Archiv. curieus.

(3) The chapel of Our Lady of Beth-Aram, which had been demolished by the Huguenots, was rebuilt in 1615, by John de Salette, Bishop of Lescar; but the miraculous image is not there.

(4) Astolfi.

At Paris, under the very eyes of the court, which at that time protected them, they massacred at St. Medard, during the sermon, a great number of unarmed Catholics. The parishes, terrified at the insolence of these factious men, who went to sermons armed to the teeth,[1] petitioned to have artillery planted at the entrance of the churches to protect themselves; and the time was seen when the ceremonies of Catholic worship could no longer be celebrated in a most Christian kingdom, but under the protection of a range of cannon.[2] "It was then that they began at Paris," says M. Capefigue, "a war of popular pamphlets, destined to annihilate all the ancient belief; placards were posted up against the Eucharist; particularly against the mass, even in the palace of the Louvre. The walls of the churches, and the posts of public places, bore witness every morning to this ardour for proselytism, which characterised the Reformation."[3]

It is with the opinions of sects as with the waters of certain springs,—they grow softer in time by flowing in the open air. The Protestants of our day have greatly changed from their old surliness and their ancient Vandalism; they leave the dead in their tombs, and the Blessed Virgin and the saints on their pedestals, and no longer go to the sermon, in time of peace, with the dagger in their hand and the musket on the shoulder; in fine, as Pere Sicard jocosely said of the Copts, one may meet with very good men among them, *heresy excepted.* But the Protestants of our time, as well as the Protestants of old, are wanting in loyalty, when they rank themselves as martyrs before the Catholics of the sixteenth century, whom, on the contrary, they provoked to extremities, by unheard of impieties and unjustifiable cruelties.

(1) "They have been met, going in hostile array, twelve on horseback, accompanied by twenty men on foot marching as to battle."—(Archiv. curieus.) This *evangelical* people, who came out from the sermons "with wild eyes and threatening looks," according to the testimony of Erasmus, were always ready to take up arms, and as prompt at fighting as at disputing.

(2) See Archiv. curieus, etc.

(3) Capefigue.

They remember well enough the most deplorable episode in the history of France, for they constantly reproach us with it; but they forget the long provocations which preceded it. They forget the Catholic garrisons thrown from the tops of fortresses into the waters of the Rhone, in violation of sworn faith; they forget the ravages of that ferocious Baron des Adrets, who was more dreaded by all the provinces of the south of France *than the tempest which passes over the great fields of wheat.* They forget along with the massacre of Orthez, the sack of Rome, the horrors of which were in great measure their work, and the troubles of Germany, and the fagots of England, and the proscriptions of Ireland, and the civil wars of Scotland, and our provinces dismembered in expectation, and basely sold to the English; they forget all that, and many things more. These tactics date from a long way off; from the time of our religious wars, they published, in all haste, after every misdeed, an incredible number of precious apologies, in which they represented themselves as timid lambs, and the Catholics as ogres; which did not fail to make an impression.

"Protestantism," says M. de Chateaubriand, "accused Rome of intolerance, while slaughtering the Catholics in England and France, throwing to the wind the ashes of the dead, lighting fagots at Geneva, defiling itself with the violent deeds of Munster, and dictating the atrocious laws which have oppressed the Irish, hardly set free even at this day, after three centuries of oppression." [1]

Kings were not more tranquil than the people, and the throne was not less threatened than the altar. Luther was not afraid to teach openly that all who defended the Pope and the Catholic religion, ought to be treated like the soldiers of a chief of banditti, "were they even kings and Cæsars." And Calvin added, "The powers of the earth give in their own resignation when they oppose the progress of our doctrine . . . . it is better *to spit in their faces* than to obey them." It was on this principle that

(1) M. de Chateaubr., Essai sur la litt. Angl., t. i.

the Calvinist preacher, Des Rosiers, laid down in his pamphlets that maxim which he applied to Catherine de Medicis, "It is lawful to kill a king or a queen who opposes the reformation of the Church."[1]

This insolence, and these subversive theories, accompanied by frequent revolts, drew down at length upon the contrivers of our intestine disorders, sad and sanguinary reprisals.

The policy of a prince, mortally irritated by an attempt of the Protestants against his person,[2] threw the court into extremes; they thought, what was the fact, that it was a question for royalty, whether it should exist, or not, and placed upon our history a page of blood. The St. Bartholomew saved the Valois from the fate of the Stuarts,[3] and Catholicism from imminent ruin; but it

(1) This was also the opinion of Calvin. The Huguenots had so well understood their apostles, that Catherine de Medicis found, even in her chamber, a paper in which she was warned that she would be assassinated, if she did not dismiss all the Catholics about her.—(Capef., Hist. de la Ref.)

(2) "Some said that if our King Charles had been too cruel to the Huguenots, it was not without very great reason; the day of Meaux above all provoked him; for others might find some excuse in some honourable cloak of religion; but that day might be properly called an attempt on the king's person, on his brother and the queen, which they would have willingly executed, had they been able. The king, moreover, often said that he would never pardon them for that; and it stood him in good stead, said he, that he put himself in a good attitude of defence among his Swiss, with whom, as he marched to battle, among other good and spirited things that he said to them, was this, that he preferred dying a king, to living a slave and a captive. The taking up of arms on Shrove Tuesday, affected him also very much, and he was still more incensed against the Huguenots for having corrupted Monsieur, his brother, and the King of Navarre, and having induced and urged them on to make war against him, in a very wretched state of his malady. 'At least,' said he, 'they ought to have waited for my death; it was too great hatred against me.'" (Vie de Charles IX., par Br., p. 16.) It is to be observed that the author was contemporary with Charles IX., that he lived at his court, that he boldly calls the St. Bartholomew a vile massacre, and that he nowhere assigns religion as the motive for it.

(3) See how Swift, a great writer, politician, and distinguished member of the Church of England, judged the Calvinists, in the year 1732: "The puritans, who had, almost from the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign, been a perpetual thorn in the Church's side, joining with the Scotch enthusiasts in the time of Charles I., were the principal cause of the Irish rebellion and massacre, by distressing that prince, and making it impossible for him to send over timely succours. And after that prince had satisfied his parliament in every single

was an inhuman measure, which the religion of Christ condemns, and the stain of which she shakes off from her mantle. Catherine and Charles had spared the heretics,—they destroyed the factious. The Catholic bishops protested against this act of violence, by saving the Calvinists in their palaces.[1] The followers of heresy, who have so diligently exaggerated and published their losses on this occasion, *have forgotten nothing but this fact.*

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point to be complained of, the same sectaries, by poisoning the minds and affections of the people, with the most false and wicked representations of their king, were able, in the compass of a few years, to embroil the three nations in a bloody rebellion, at the expense of many thousand lives; to turn the kingly power into anarchy; to murder their prince in the face of the world; and (in their own style) to destroy the Church root and branch."—(Swift's works, Queries relating to the Sacramental Test.)—In Scotland, at the battle of Philiphaugh, gained by Leslie, the chief of the Calvinist covenanters, over the Marquis of Montrose, the Presbyterians massacred, in cold blood, many of the prisoners; others, according to Wishart, were "cast from a bridge into the Tweed," while a Presbyterian minister, who presided at the execution, called out, rubbing his hands, "*Bravely done!*"—(Border Minstrelsy.) Under Cromwell, the Church of England was declared *malignant*, and the puritans, who had so loudly clamoured for liberty of conscience for themselves, shut up all the Anglican churches when they had come into power. Evelyn records that they made their way, armed with guns, in the English cathedrals, and that they ridiculed the Anglicans, who were preparing to celebrate the Lord's Supper on Christmas-day. Swift also said to them, "Whether these same Protestants, when they have by their dexterity made themselves the national religion, and disposed the church revenues among their pastors or themselves, will be so kind to allow us dissenters, I do not say a share in employments, but a bare toleration by law? The reason of my doubt is, because I have been so very idle as to read above fifty pamphlets, written by as many Presbyterian divines, loudly disclaiming this idol toleration, some of them calling it (I know not how properly), a rag of popery, and all agreeing it was to establish iniquity by a law. Now I would be glad to know when and where their successors have renounced this doctrine, and before what witnesses." Under the first princes of the House of Hanover they began again to cry out very loudly against the Anglicans for persecuting, who ironically replied thus: "If the dissenters will be satisfied with such a toleration by law, as hath been granted them in England, I believe the majority of both houses will fall readily in with it; . . . . farther it will be hard to persuade this House of Commons, and perhaps much harder the next. For to say the truth, we make a mighty difference here between suffering thistles to grow among us, and wearing them for posies."—(Ibid.)

(1) The Bishop of Lisieux, John Hennuyer, boldly prevented the execution of the decree of Charles IX., by opening the gates of his palace to those Calvinists who had been ill treated by the bishops of Normandy. Several other bishops,

Ferdinand the Catholic, who would not have this noxious creeping plant of heresy invade the beautiful *vegas* of Spain, and sterilize that truly Christian soil, had opposed this great evil from the beginning, by the great remedy of the Inquisition, which stopped its audacious march at the foot of the Pyrenees.

Italy, torn to pieces at the time with civil wars, was not so fortunate, and Protestantism displayed all its fury there in the sack of Rome; the Constable de Bourbon had pointed out to his soldiers, who were in great measure heretics, the capital of the Christian world as a rich prey quite defenceless, which they might despoil almost without striking a blow. The spirit which animated the chiefs of these disorderly hordes, will enable one to guess that of the soldiers. The Lutheran colonel Frunsberg, who marched to the siege of Rome with the Constable, had had made a fine and solid chain of gold, which had cost him no more than the trouble of stealing it in the churches, *on purpose*, he said, *to strangle the pope with his own hand.*[1]

Rome, without allies, and attacked unawares, defended herself at the time very bravely, and at the first assault, the Constable de Bourbon was mortally wounded by a musket-shot. He had scarcely time to order them to cover him with his cloak, to conceal his death from his troops. This precaution was fruitless; the report of sinister augury circulated, and the heretical soldiers, says a contemporary historian, who had collected his documents on the spot itself, only fought more *demoniacally* to avenge him, crying out furiously, "Sangre, sangre! Bourbon, Bourbon!" Nothing could resist these imperial bands, intoxicated with rage and thirsting for blood! the ramparts were scaled; the Romans gave way, and the fatal victory of impiety was followed up, from street to street, with such fury that one would have said that *hell was let loose*, and fighting under the banners of the Prince of Orange, who had the melancholy glory

and especially those of Bayonne, Valence, Vienne, Oléron, and Uzès, incurred the displeasure of the court by extending their protection to the reformed.

(1) Brantôme, Capitaines étrangers, t. ii.

of bringing this criminal enterprise to an end. "The discharges of musketry," says Brantôme, in his Life of the Constable de Bourbon, "the shouts of the combatants, the cries of the wounded, the clash of arms, the thrilling sound of trumpets, the continued roll of the drums, which animated the soldiers to the fight, and the thrusts of the lances, made such a noise, that the thunder of heaven could not have been heard." The conquerors pursued the vanquished so closely that they hardly had time to let down the portcullis of the Castle of St. Angelo, the fortress of modern Rome, where the pope had hastily taken refuge, accompanied by some cardinals. Nor would they even have done it but for the chivalrous devotion of three young noble Romans, of one of those rare patrician families which are authentically traced up to the age of Augustus. When everything was giving way in Rome—sacked and pillaged—and the princes of the church spurred on their horses to the citadel, pursued by the foot-soldiers, three Orsinis—Juannin, Antonio, and Valerius—"brave and valiant lords," says Brantôme, and Jerom Mattei, rallied with "two hundred good men," at the head of the Sixtine bridge, to fight the imperialists and keep the passage free. The Prince of Orange, at the head of his heretical battalions, came up to attack them, and, "on both sides, the combat was sustained very bravely. Nevertheless, at the end, the prince charged them so furiously, that they were forced to abandon the bridge, which they had so heroically defended;" but it was not till they had seen the iron portcullis of the citadel let down to protect the illustrious fugitives. Rome being thus conquered, continues the same historian, the foot-soldiers, "who were recently imbued with the new religion," began to plunder and kill, without sparing the holy relics of the temples, or the convents, or persons of dignity, or the ornaments of the Madonnas; "their cruelty extended even to the marbles and ancient statues." According to the custom of the Huguenots of that time, they mixed up sacrilegious buffooneries with these scenes of blood, revolting debauchery, and pillage. "Dressed like cardinals, they made burlesque processions about the city, saying in derision the Litany of the Blessed

Virgin." After defiling themselves with infamous things, which it would be shameful to speak of, or listen to, these miscreants, as Brantôme remarks, went almost all to die, a short time after, at the siege of Naples, after losing in one way or other the gold sacrilegiously plundered from the altars and temples; which made the Spaniards say that *el diablo los avia dado, y el diablo los avia llevado.*[1]

The veneration of Mary was not abolished in England without disturbances. This devotion was considered there by all as the first bulwark of Catholicism, and Catholicism, which had polished the manners, corrected the laws, and fertilised the fields of Great Britain, had struck so deep root in the English soil, that the sinister triumph of the Reformation, in that kingdom, would be an enigma incapable of solution, if the savage and capricious tyranny of Henry VIII., the servile absurdity of his parliament, and the cupidity of the great lords, did not give the key to it.

Under Henry VIII., who made war against the saints only to get possession of the diamonds and gold of their shrines, the invocation of the Blessed Virgin was maintained, although in one of his bad tempers, the husband of Ann Boleyn had ordered the confessor of Catherine of Arragon to be burnt with pieces of wood taken from statues of Our Lady. It was not till the reign of Edward VI., that the fratricide Somerset, who pulled down the finest churches in London to build his Venetian palace of Somerset House, and abolished the ancient liturgy, caused the images of Mary and the saints to be removed from their ancient sanctuaries.

This impious measure was the drop of water which makes the vase run over; disturbances broke out all over the kingdom, gatherings of ten or twenty thousand malcontents, some commanded by lords, others by men from the people, vindicated their right to serve God and honour the Blessed Virgin, in the same manner as their ancestors had done. Historians very partial in favour of Protestantism, cannot help acknowledging that the

(1) Brantôme, Capitaines étrangers, t. ii.

discontent was almost universal, and that the English people testified energetically their antipathy to the new doctrine which was imposed upon them. They were compelled to yield to force; bands of adventurers, brought from Italy, Spain, and Germany, stifled the last cry of Catholicism, and the people, oppressed by laws which would have disgraced Tiberius—the people, from whom were taken along with their churches, the services for their dead, the hospitals for their sick, the common lands which they held of the monasteries gratuitously—the people, without resource, without any place of refuge, without bread, went by night to weep over the demolished altars of those fine alms-giving abbeys, the new owners of which had begun by banishing alms-deeds and hospitality.[1]

(1) "Go into any county," says the radical Cobbett, "and survey, even at this day, the ruins of its perhaps twenty abbeys and priories; and then ask yourself, 'What have we in exchange for these?' Go to the site of some once opulent convent. Look at the cloister, now become, in the hands of a rack-renter, the receptacle for dung, fodder, and fagot-wood; see the hall, where, for ages, the widow, the orphan, the aged, and the stranger found a table ready spread; see a bit of its walls now helping to make a cattle-shed, the rest having been hauled away to build a *workhouse;* recognise, in the side of a barn, a part of the once magnificent chapel: and, if chained to the spot by your melancholy musings, you be admonished of the approach of night by the voice of the screech owl, issuing from those arches which once, at the same hour, resounded with the vespers of the monk, and which have, for seven hundred years, been assailed by storms and tempests in vain;—if thus admonished of the necessity of seeking food, shelter, and a bed, lift your eyes and look at the white-washed and dry-rotten shell on the hill, called the 'gentleman's house;' and apprized of the 'board-wages' and the spring-guns, suddenly turn your head; jog away from the scene of devastation: with 'old English hospitality' in your mind, reach the nearest inn, and there, in room half-warmed and half-lighted, and with reception precisely proportioned to the presumed length of your purse, sit down and listen to an account of the hypocritical pretences, the base motives, the tyrannical and bloody means, under which, from which, and by which that devastation was effected, and that hospitality banished for ever from the land."—(Cobbett, Hist. of the Protestant Reformation, Letter V., 155.)

It is certain that the suppression of the abbeys was not, by any means, a popular measure, and that it left without any resource, not only a great number of priests, whose families had endowed these pious asylums, but a population of labourers, of poor and of aged soldiers. The wide and generous hospitality of the Catholic clergy was not exercised within a narrow and limited circle; it partook in some measure of the infinite, that basis of its belief. The great baron,

The Welsh peasants, those Armoricans of England, who had embraced Christianity before the arrival of the Saxons, could not endure the absence of the saints, with whom they had adorned their old oaks and druidical springs.[1] Not being able, watched and harassed as they were by the last of the Tudors, and later on by Cromwell, to profess Catholicity—having no longer either altars or priests, they almost returned to paganism, and it is not yet many years ago since it was proposed, among the Anglicans, to go and convert *those gross idolaters*, who had gone back, for want of sympathy for dry and multiform Protestantism, to worship trees and fountains, as did the ancient Britons in the time of Cæsar.[2]

with his train of knights, knocked at the door of the monastery, as well as the beggar who wandered about the country, staff in hand, singing pious canticles. There were then no inns, and when the harmonious ringing of the abbey bells came no longer to cheer the soul of the traveller late on his journey, he was obliged to be resigned to lie down in the open air, with no other shelter against the inclemency of the weather than branches blown down by the winds, or wet with rain, from the tree by the wayside. The Norman laws, which still govern the English, grant the entire patrimony to the eldest son of the nobleman's family; his brothers, the slaves of his good pleasure, are his parasites, or his servants. But, at that remote period, commerce, which has since procured them honourable means of existence, was not even in its infancy. Catholicism, which could not remould the feudal laws, but which constantly laboured to soften them down, gathered into its bosom the deserted members of the English aristocracy, and secured to them that sweet and peaceful existence for which the laws of the land had not provided. Not content with having fertilised, by numberless clearings, the wildest and most uncultivated lands of Great Britain, the abbeys made it a duty to encourage agriculture. By a care wholly providential, their charity gave up to indigent families who lived under the shadow of their lofty steeples wide commons undivided and unenclosed, belonging to all like the air and sea. The harpies of the court, who devoured the minority of the son of Henry VIII., did not fail to unite the commons to the church lands; all were enclosed and bristling with quickset fences. Neglecting agriculture for pasturages which did not employ manual labour, the new possessors changed the arable lands into meadows, and after paralysing the arms of the labourers they starved the country, and so effectually depopulated it, that amid the deserted dwellings of an opulent village, there sometimes remained only the solitary cottage of a shepherd. —(See Lingard, Hist. of England.)

(1) In the county of Brecknock, in Wales, there is still found a *menhir* of gigantic height, which bears the name of *Mayen y Marynnion*, or stone of the Virgin Mary.—(Camden's *Britannia.*)

(2) Gordon's Modern Geography, p. 217.

The inhabitants of the southern frontiers of Scotland had no less repugnance than the Welsh to embrace the new doctrine.

The *Border* was more than any other part of the kingdom under the immediate protection of Mary: her name had been given to the clearest lake,[1] to the bluest fountains, and the most picturesque hermitages. There it was that Melrose and Jedburgh were built—two majestic abbeys dedicated to the Blessed Virgin—two prodigious edifices erected by that faith which works miracles, in a country poor and continually disturbed by foreign and intestine wars. What *border* trooper had not solicited at Jedburgh, in the name of the Blessed Virgin Mary, hospitality, always generously granted? What mountain chieftain had not taken off his blue bonnet, decorated with an eagle's feather, before the Virgin of Melrose, the most celebrated and frequented of the four chief places of pilgrimage of the kingdom? The pavement of the immense Basilica covered all that Scotland had possessed of noble birth and illustrious courage; there men trod over the dust of heroes, whose effigies, recumbent on marble, devoutly joined their hands, as if to invoke Jesus and Mary, two names which Catholics always join together. The Blessed Virgin reigned there over both living and dead. During the day, all resounded around her with sacred hymns, and in the night, when the tempest roared, and the changeful light of the moon made the pieces of stained glass glitter, which were set like emeralds in light stone window frames, you would have said that all the garlands worked in stone, and all the chivalrous banners which decorated the church, trembled in the wind, and that the old Scotch lords, rising up, armed as they were upon their tombs, saluted the holy Mother of our Redeemer.[2]

(1) The beautiful St. Mary's Lake, situated at the source of the river Yarrow, in the *Border*, which is often covered with numerous flights of wild swans, had taken its name from a beautiful chapel of Our Lady, to which the Scottish nobility of the frontier often went on a pilgrimage. The chapel has been pulled down, but the lake has kept its name and its spotless birds.

(2) See how Sir Walter Scott, who placed fine talents for describing scenery and also archæological science at the service of his graceful poetry, describes the magnificent ruins of the Abbey of Melrose, as seen by moonlight:—

At the foot of the venerated altar of Our Lady of Melrose, the English and Scotch, laying aside their hereditary antipathies, were no longer anything but humble and peaceful pilgrims. Chiefs of clans came there to pray for the repose of the souls of warriors of a hostile clan, fallen beneath their dirk or under their claymore, in the course of some mountain war.[1] Sinners bewailed their faults there before the Comforter of the afflicted; and then, rising up full of confidence in her merciful intercession, they went to found expiatory monuments, the name of which perpetuated the memory of their remorse of conscience.[2]

The Calvinist preachers, who were as declared enemies to the arts as to the saints, demolished Melrose and Jedburgh, with a considerable number of sanctuaries of less renown. Of all the splendours which surrounded the Blessed Virgin of Melrose

"If thou would'st view fair Melrose aright,
Go visit it by the pale moonlight;
For the gay beams of lightsome day
Gild, but to flout, the ruins gray.
When the broken arches are black in night,
And each shafted oriel glimmers white;
When the cold light's uncertain shower
Streams on the ruined central tower;
When buttress and buttress, alternately,
Seem framed of ebon and ivory;
When silver edges the imagery,
And the scrolls that teach thee to live and die;
When distant Tweed is heard to rave,
And the owlet to hoot o'er the dead man's grave,
Then go—but go alone the while—
Then view St. David's ruined pile;
And, home returning, soothly swear,
Was never scene so sad and fair!"

(Lay of the Last Minstrel, canto ii.)

(1) There is still extant a treaty of peace between two hostile clans, whereby the chiefs of both bind themselves to make the four pilgrimages of Scotland, for the repose of the souls of those who had fallen on either side. These four pilgrimages were Scone, Dundee, Paisley, and Melrose.—(Border Minstrelsy, Introd.)

(2) These monumental penances were frequent along the borders; some of the buildings still remain; for instance, the *Tower of Repentance*, in Dumfriesshire, and, according to vulgar tradition, the church of Linton, in Roxburghshire. —(Border Minstrelsy, Introd.)

there remained nothing but the wreck of an altar, which was soon covered over with the tall grass and weeds of the ruins. Sometimes, at first, a dark shade glided at night beneath the broken arches of the abbey church, and the hum of human voices was heard mingling with the low sound of waters of the Tweed. It was a monk, who came stealthily to celebrate the divine mysteries for a small flock of the faithful, who had not forsaken the ancient religion. These visits became so dangerous, that the clergy, in prudence, were obliged to give them up; but nothing could prevent the people from burying their dead in the devastated cemeteries of the old abbeys, and by a feeling of propriety which does honour to the Scotch, women only were buried, for a long time, in the enclosed burial-places, where the virgins of the Lord reposed.[1]

The first harvest made by the apostles of Calvin in the mountains of the *Border* was so discouraging, that they resolved to abandon the clans to their evil destiny, and wait till the want of light, the privation of the sacraments, and the total absence of the ceremonies of the proscribed religion, should drive them into the nets of Protestantism; which, in reality, took place in the course of time.[2]

(1) See Johnson's Tour in the Hebrides. The Scotch highlanders still continue to bury their dead, at the present day, in the old Catholic cemeteries: one of the fairest isles of Loch Lomond, the isle of *Nuns*, is the burial-place of several clans; the tombs of the chiefs of Macgregor, and of some noble families, who claim descent from the ancient kings of Scotland, stand round the ruins of the abbey church, which was pulled down by the ruthless followers of Calvin.

(2) This policy has not only been practised, but loudly approved of by Anglicans themselves. Swift advises it as good to be followed, in his celebrated pamphlets on Ireland: "Their lands (Catholics) are almost entirely taken from them, and they are rendered incapable of purchasing any more; and for the little that remains, provision is made by the late act against popery, that it will daily crumble away; to prevent which, some of the most considerable among them are already turned Protestants, and so in all probability will many more. Then, the popish priests are all registered, and without permission (which I hope will not be granted), they can have no successors; so that the Protestant clergy will find it perhaps no difficult matter to bring great numbers over to the church; and in the mean time the common people, without leaders, without discipline, or natural courage, being little better than *hewers of wood and drawers of water*, are out of

Under James VI., the borderers were still so cool towards the doctrine of Geneva, that it was upon their warlike clans that the king depended in his numerous contests with his democratic church.[1] A hundred years afterwards, they still used to pray sometimes on the borders of fountains which flowed before the ruined chapels of Mary and the saints, and they carried the water from these springs to a considerable distance, to procure health for the sick.[2]

The recollections attached to the veneration of Mary still survive in the valleys and forests of the Border; they are met with in the historic ballads, sung by the shepherds and mountaineers. It is a knight, treacherously slain on a lone heath, whose deep wounds are washed at the fountain of Our Lady, and who is carried into her chapel to have the vigils of the dead kept

all capacity of doing any mischief, if they were ever so well inclined."—(Letter concerning the Sacramental Test.) The Scottish border was submitted to this negative system, and if it did not come forth from it victorious, like Ireland, it strove, nevertheless, before it gave way; and Protestantism did not predominate there till after it had pulled down the churches, and extinguished, one after another, the lights of the ancient faith.

(1) "Never," says a Scotch Protestant author, "could the Calvinist clergy forget that they owed their elevation to the fall, or, at least, to the depression of royalty. In Scotland, the Reformed Church was, for nearly two centuries, either the declared enemy, or the ambitious rival, of its prince. The disciples of Calvin could hardly divest themselves of a tendency to democracy, and the republican forms of their ecclesiastical administration were often held up as a model for the state to follow. The theocracy, haughtily proclaimed, was rigorously exercised; the offences committed in the king's household fell under the insolent jurisdiction of the ministers. The prince was formally reprimanded for having neglected to say grace before or after meals, and for tolerating the amusements of the queen. A solemn malediction was pronounced against man, horse, or lance, that should assist the king in his quarrel with the Earl of Gowrie, a conspirator. The monarch's courtiers, present at the sermon, were compared to Aman, the queen to Herodias, and the prince himself to Achab, Herod, and Jeroboam. This excessive zeal was far from being agreeable to James VI."—(Sir Walter Scott, Hist. of Scotland and Border Minstrelsy.) Charles II. often whispered in the ear of his confidants that Calvinism was not the religion for a gentleman.

(2) A Calvinist physician of the seventeenth century bitterly censured the inhabitants of the Border, who used even in his time to frequent several holy springs, to carry water from them to the sick.—(Account of the presbytery of Pentpont.)

over him; it is some great baron, who is buried at the foot of St. Mary's cross, and on whose tomb the monks will come and pray, "as long as Our Lady is invoked in Scotland." The bard, in expressing himself thus, imagined that he was really saying *for ever!* They are knights who leave their golden beads as pledges of their faith, &c. In every danger, they call upon God and Our Lady; never the one without the other.

The scattered wrecks of Catholicity took refuge in the north of Scotland; and there, protected by interminable wastes, and ranges of mist-covered mountains, they have maintained their ground, in a few solitary castles washed by the stormy waves of the Northern Ocean. There they long prayed for the restoration of the Stuarts to the Blessed Virgin, who was honoured by the Stuarts. Cardinal York, the last of that unfortunate family, had rejoined his brother in the tomb, yet they kept praying on; and some poor mountaineers, who cannot believe the extinction of that ancient race, pray still.[1]

Ireland, thoroughly Catholic, remained faithful to the veneration of the Blessed Virgin, amidst the longest and most oppressive persecution that ever existed. Under pain of having neither bread nor shelter, the poor Irishman was not only compelled to pay richly the clergy of a religion which he did not profess, but also to follow its observances. But he was not the less attached in his heart and soul to the faith of his fathers. Deprived of his churches, he came to assist at the divine office in the secret underground vaults of his old feudal manor-houses, among the ruins of monasteries, in the echoing caves where the Druids had formerly celebrated, by the murmuring of a rolling sea, their rites of blood, of which they have carried away with them the spirit and myth. They posted sentinels on

(1) A celebrated Scotch writer says that they prayed every evening for the restoration of the Stuarts, in the Catholic mansions of Scotland, long after the death of Cardinal York. Many of the Scotch Highlanders cannot even now be persuaded that the race of their ancient kings is extinct. "It is not the Stuarts who are dead," said a Highlander to a French traveller, "it is loyalty that is departed."

the heights to protect the proscribed prayers, and the priest's head, upon which a price was set; for Protestant bloodhounds, who had taken the name of *Mass-hunters*, allured by the bait of five pounds sterling, which the commissioners of Dublin paid for the head of every ecclesiastic belonging to the communion of Rome, tracked the *Papists* across the mountains and woods, as if they had been so many wild beasts. Happily that frightful time is passed away, and six millions of Catholics freely now invoke Our Lady in that *green isle*, which has so well deserved its glorious surname of the *island of Saints.*

It was not in England alone that the veneration of the Blessed Virgin, swept away by the hurricane of Protestantism, left numerous traces of its existence: the melancholy and picturesque ruins of monasteries dedicated to Mary, still cover the fairest spots of Germany; her name has remained to a great many cities of the north; gulfs bear it in Denmark; and Styria, Austria, Illyria, Switzerland, the Tyrol, and the grand Duchy of Baden, still possess sanctuaries where the Catholic inhabitants beyond the Rhine go devoutly to pray to Our Lady. By these still majestic remains of a devotion formerly so general and so respected, we may judge of the extent of its ancient influence, as we judge of the magnitude of a shipwreck, by the number of half broken masts and torn sails which float upon the water.

The religious veneration of Mary recovered in the New world what it had lost in the Old. Spanish and French missionaries embarking with an image of Our Lady,—whom they invoked during their perilous navigation, and which, when they reached the end of their dangerous voyage, they deposited under some *ajoupa* of palm branches,—undertook, under the protection of Mary, which rendered them powerful, they said, "as an army set in battle array," to civilize and convert the two continents of America.

Warriors, who undertake to subdue foreign countries, carry in their train every requisite to accomplish a work of destruction and blood,—arms, soldiers, parks of artillery; devastation goes before them, and tears follow them. The Catholic missionaries

went forth to the conquest of the West Indies with an image of Mary, a cross, and a rosary. Thanks to their almost superhuman labours, tribes of people, snatched from the caves of the mountains and the shades of great forests, came to form small colonies, where Christianity was seen again to flourish, fresh and pure, as in the time of the primitive church.

Those religious men, who have enriched botany, history, and geography with a multitude of precious discoveries, became artists, and even artisans, in order to teach their Christian colonies, and directed their new believers in the way of the arts, as well as in the way of salvation. Then were seen ignorant savages, who had sat down but a short time before at a feast of human flesh, taking up the compass of the architect, the chisel of the sculptor, and the palette of the painter, and erecting, with their own hands, temples to God and chapels to Mary. The recitation of the rosary was the exercise of piety best suited to a people addicted to the chase; accordingly in the evening, when the shadows of the tulip-tree and the magnolia were lengthened in the open spaces of the forest, or in the savannah, you heard the "Hail Mary!" repeated in the language of the forests, on all the American hills. Mary was the Mother of the savage, as well as of the European; and she was not more religiously invoked in the temples, all glittering with gold, which the first Spanish conquerors had built, in her honour, in Mexico and Potosi, than in those country churches, which the pious missionaries had dedicated to her under the title of Our Lady of Loretto and of Our Lady of Dolours, on the banks of the river of the Amazons and the river of the Hurons.

America was not the utmost extent of the conquests of the servants of God and Mary: they explored the burning regions of Africa, and converted the black princes of Guinea and Monomotapa; at the same time they made their way into Ceylon, into the peninsula of India, to Japan and China, and everywhere the image of Our Lady was treated with reverence and favour. The Mongolian ladies, bowing down before the Mother of Jesus, styled her the holy and glorious Mary; the Prince of Cashmere sent

her wax-tapers and presents; the grand Lama had a church erected to her, under the title of the Annunciation. The Chinese ladies offered her perfumes and flowers; and the Japanese, who, alas! paid very dear for their energetic devotion to the true faith, recited their long rosaries of crystal as they passed through the streets of idolatrous cities, full of bonzas and pagans.[1]

These triumphs, obtained in far distant lands, were not the only ones which came to console Mary for the outrages of Protestantism. Scarcely had Calvin descended into the tomb, when the battle of Lepanto was gained by the Spaniards, beneath the banner of the Blessed Virgin.[2] John Sobieski attributed also his celebrated victory over the Turks at the siege of Vienna, to the Mother of God; and his first care, when he entered the delivered city, was to go and prostrate himself, *with his face on the ground,* before the altar of Our Lady, where he himself sung a *Te Deum* of thanksgiving. The magnificent standard of the Mahometans was sent to Our Lady of Loretto;[3] and the Polish hero kept for himself a trophy which interested him, as he said, more than all the rest: it was an old picture of great antiquity, which had been discovered in the ruins of the village of Wishau. It represented Our Lady, whose crown was supported by two angels, bearing in their hands scrolls with these Latin inscriptions:- *In hac imagine Mariæ, vinces, Johannes. In hac imagine Mariæ, victor ero, Johannes.* (By this picture of Mary, thou, John, shalt conquer. By this picture of Mary, I John shall conquer.)

(1) Lettres Edifiantes; Annales de la Propagation de la Foi.

(2) The pope had sent this blessed standard to Don John, who had it displayed on his flag-ship.

(3) The length of this flag was twelve feet, by eight wide. The border was green, and the ground red. It was of cloth; the ornaments were embroidered in silver, the Arabic inscriptions in letters of gold. In the centre of this Mussulman flag, which the Polish heroes deposited at the feet of the Virgin, were read these words, which received a striking contradiction from the Christian images which attested the humiliation of the crescent before the cross—"There is no god but God, and Mahomet is his prophet."—(See Histoire de Pologne, par Leonard Chodzko.)

This picture was considered miraculous; John Sobieski destined it for his royal chapel of Zolkiew, and it afterwards followed him in all his campaigns.

In the year 1647, the Emperor Ferdinand III. solemnly dedicated himself, his family, and the empire to the Queen of heaven. A tall column was erected in the great square of Vienna, in honour of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary; and her statue with the moon beneath her feet, crushing the serpent's head with her heel, was placed on the top of the column.

Calvinism was still disturbing France, and its icy breath, penetrating the masses of the people, slowly, but fatally cooled their religious feelings; for irreverent discourse and impious scoffing always produce the worst effect upon the people, who do not reason upon their belief, but lose or recover it according to the arguments which win their attention. The churches and altars laid waste had lost that holy attractive power, which is imparted by pomp and long traditions of homage. The Madonnas, despoiled and thrown down from their pedestals, were restored so poor, that the heart was oppressed at the sight of them, and the feet kept away from their sanctuaries. The clergy, calumniated, ruined, degraded, could hardly succeed anywhere but among the people, who after all undervalued them; for the people, who make great account of birth, never respect their equals. Finally, the abbeys, placed *in commendam*, belonged to military men, who undertook to place in them superiors, whose office was limited to that of superintendents of the privations of a community, which had no longer to apply their revenues to the use of the poor, but to that of the captain, or courtier, who was its commendatory abbot. This enormous abuse, which would have ended in the destruction of every monastery in France, without the aid of revolutions, still continued under Henry IV.,[1] notwithstanding the just complaints of the clergy, and was not put an end to till the reign of Louis XIII. From Louis XI. to

(1) See the Memoires de Jaques Sobieski.

this prince we have to glean, little by little, the facts which testify to the veneration of our kings for the Blessed Virgin. Louis XII., however, made a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Loretto; and Henry III. sent the Duke of Joyeuse thither in 1585, with a magnificent equipage, to offer presents, and make a vow to the holy Madonna. The same prince, having founded the order of the Holy Ghost, placed among its statutes that *each knight should be obliged to recite every day one decade of the rosary.*

About the end of the sixteenth century, the vigils of the feasts of the Blessed Virgin were still observed as fasts, and no one was exempt from this religious practice. The licentious captains of Charles IX. and Henry III. warmly defended themselves from the charge of having broken their abstinence on the eve of the Assumption of Our Lady; some persons having done this through inadvertency, as they passed through Italy, one of the boldest and least scrupulous of the historians of the time thinks proper to withhold their names, "out of regard for their reputation," and protests that these gentlemen were wholly *unaware* of the feast of the following day.

The religious veneration of Mary, which had been somewhat neglected, revived majestically under Louis XIII. That prince, to return thanks to the Blessed Virgin for the triumphs which he had gained over the Protestants, and to obtain, through her intercession, a glorious peace with the powers of Europe who made war against him, declares, in an edict dated from Saint Germain en Laye (10th of February, 1633), that "taking the most holy and glorious Virgin for the special protectress of his kingdom, he dedicates particularly to her his person, his states, his crown, and his subjects, beseeching her to defend France against the efforts of all her enemies, whether in peace or war," and in memory of this dedication, Louis promises to have the high altar of the cathedral of Paris re-erected, and to place over it a picture of the Blessed Virgin, holding in her arms "her dear Son taken down from the cross," causing himself to be represented at the feet of the Son and of the Mother, in the attitude of offering to them his sceptre and crown.

He was pleased, moreover, that every year, on the day of the Assumption, his edict should be commemorated, during high mass, in every church in France, and that after vespers there should be a solemn procession, at which all the chief companies and all the magistrates of the different cities of France were to assist.

Louis XIV. inherited the devotion of his father to the Blessed Virgin. It was he who caused to be executed, in 1723, by Couston, the group which is called "The Vow of Louis XIII.," as well as the two figures in marble, placed one on each side, and representing Louis XIII. and Louis XIV. offering their crown to the Blessed Virgin. This prince presented to the church of Boulogne a sum of 12,000 livres, to stand in place of the *ex voto* of gold, which the kings of France, from Louis XI., offered by way of homage to the Blessed Virgin. He propagated, with all his power, the devotion of the Immaculate Conception, and obtained, in 1657, of Pope Alexander VII. a bull, which Clement XI. confirmed in 1688, to have that feast celebrated in his kingdom. It was, moreover, at his request that, in 1670, the pope attached indulgences to the recital of the *angelus*.

He would himself receive Confirmation on the day of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin. This fact is attested by the following inscription in the chapel of the Louvre:—

"HAC SACRA DIE IMMACULATÆ CONCEPTIONIS
LUDOVICUS XIV., REX,
SUSCEPIT HIC SANCTISS. CONFIRMATIONIS SACRAMENTUM."

Underneath was this inscription:—

"IMMACULATA DOMINA, SALVUM FAC REGEM."

Louis XIV. inherited from his mother, Anne of Austria, a great veneration for Our Lady of Liesse; he came there in 1652 and 1673, and twice with the queen in 1680. Maria Teresa, the pious Spaniard, that queen who never caused her husband *any sorrow but for her death*, came thither also in 1677 and 1678. After the death of Anne of Austria, her son promised by vow, for

the repose of her soul, fifty thousand masses in the principal places of devotion dedicated to the Blessed Virgin.

After the treaty of the Pyrenees, he sent his thanksgiving, accompanied by rich offerings, to Our Lady of Chartres, Our Lady of Loretto, and our Lady of Grace.

Louis the Great, like his father, Louis XIII., belonged to the Confraternity of the Scapular, and said his beads regularly. Father de la Rue being one day admitted to a private audience of this prince, found him piously occupied in saying his rosary of large beads. The father, showing great surprise, accompanied with respectful sentiments of edification: "Don't be so much surprised," said the king, "I glory in saying my beads; it is a practice which I learnt from the queen, my mother, and I should be sorry to miss it for a single day."

The Spanish ambassador presented himself at the brilliant court of the great monarch, with his rosary in his hand, and no one found fault with him.

At that time it was the custom, derived from ancient times, to put a rosary and a book of hours in the marriage baskets. This custom continued till the time of Louis XV.

Louis XIII. had taken La Rochelle, the last bulwark of Calvinism in France. Louis XIV. put an end to this turbulent heresy by the revocation of the edict of Nantes. This measure, which secured the tranquillity of the kingdom, has been censured in very severe terms. People forget that the Calvinists were at that time an incorrigible faction, who had not even been ashamed to appeal to the English.

Louis XIV., the greatest monarch of his age, expired muttering with his dying lips the *Ave Maria*, which he had repeated several times over with a firm voice, while the prayers for the dying were repeated by his bedside.

CHAPTER XIII.

MODERN TIMES.

From the bosom of the Mediterranean, the blue waves of which are scented at the distance of ten leagues from the land, with the sweet perfume of the orange-tree, a rocky island rises, with mountains covered with snow, with pine forests, hills shaded by chestnut-trees of enormous size, which would make us think of Switzerland, if myrtle groves, plantations of oranges and lemons, forests of gigantic olive-trees, and the remains of Roman towers did not proclaim an Italian soil. This island is the native land of Paoli, the great patriot, and of Napoleon, the great emperor,—Corsica, an Italian island, which forms at present one of the departments of France.

This island, at the same time both fertile and uncultivated, is inhabited by a race, primitive, poor, warlike, and hospitable, like those of the Highlands of Scotland, or the mountains of Caucasus; attached to Catholicism, and at all times free from heresy, they are sensitive to excess upon all that reflects upon honour, and forgetting the divine precept, which commands the forgiveness of injuries, they take justice into their own hands, and have for centuries avenged an affront by murder.

At the first aspect of this country, which, civilized as it is, retains a certain odour of savage life, it is perceived to be inhabited by a people essentially devout to the Blessed Virgin. Her image is set up at the entrance of the villages, in the places where streets meet, by the sides of fountains, on the heights of promontories, in the midst of woods of orange-trees which grow on the coast. The environs of Bastia are covered with delightful little chapels, in the Italian style, dedicated to the Annunciation, the Visitation, or Our Lady of Good Counsel; on these festival days, which occur in the spring or summer, the city is deserted to go and visit these Madonnas, whither the people come by paths perfumed and bordered with flowers. After having prayed to the

Blessed Virgin, each family is seated beneath the cool shade of large trees, and they indulge in suitable rejoicing, as they partake of a collation in the open air.

Corsica had formerly several cathedrals; the greater part of them were built under the title of the Assumption; at present the most solemn feast of Mary is that of the Immaculate Conception. It is preceded by a novena, and announced by the sound of bells and the noise of fireworks; the ships are decorated with flags; the pavement of the streets is strewed with myrtle; a solemn procession, in which the Brothers of the Conception, in the habit of penitents, with lighted torches in their hands, precede the image of the Blessed Virgin, adorned with a silver crown, necklaces of precious stones, and bracelets of gold, walks round the city to the sound of military music, while the altars of Mary, loaded with a profusion of flowers, cast upon the hallowed pavement the glare of their thousand tapers. It is a feast perfectly Italian in its religious attractiveness and expansive joy.

In country places, the parish priest, the vicar, or merely some old man, says the beads every evening, at the hour when the village bell rings the "knell of parting day."[1]

Sometimes there is just visible in a misty distance, on the summit of a steep rock, a dark figure leaning on his carbine: it is some outlaw, who risks his life to join in the general prayer; for the Madonna is the last hope of these fierce, but believing men, who wear her image on their breasts, and who ask, in her name only, of the shepherds, a little milk and black bread to support their wretched existence. Only lately, a young Corsican, a companion of the famous bandit Santa Lucia, defending his life, alone and wounded, against a regiment of the line and a number of *gendarmes*, called upon the Blessed Virgin in this desperate struggle, while his relatives and friends, on their knees,

(1) "* * * * * Squilla di lontano
Che paila 'l giorno pianger, che si muore."
(Dante, Purgat., lib. viii.)

recited for him, at the foot of the rock, which was his last stand, the prayers for a departing soul. "Everything induces us to believe," says Le Droit, who relates this moving scene, "that the last thought of that unhappy man was raised up to God, for a small medal of the Blessed Virgin was found upon him, which he held in his hand, while his relations and friends were praying for him."

On the 30th of January, 1735, the nation, assembled in a general congress at Corte, to give themselves a national government, after having shaken off the yoke of the republic of Genoa, elected the most Blessed Virgin Queen of Corsica, and carried her banner in the last combats of her young liberty expiring; the two Paolis, Pascal and Clement, both great captains, both very devout to Mary,[1] commanded respect to be paid to this banner. Clement, of whom history has said little, but who is remembered in the local tradition, made his soldiers say the beads *upon their knees* before a battle. Some Englishmen, surprised at this custom, called his attention, on several occasions, to the fact that the enemy was marching upon them, and that his soldiers on their knees could not defend themselves. "Let them pray on, my lords," replied Paoli, with his martial voice and foreign accent. When their prayer was finished, the Corsicans got up like lions—for soldiers who pray, know not how to fly; the Vendeans taught that lesson to the French Republic.

Pascal Paoli had two chapels built to the Blessed Virgin—one at Pastoreccia, near Ponte-Nuovo, the scene of the bloody battle which beheld the nationality of Corsica perish, and where a good number of his relatives, who were ours also, lost their lives; the other at Morosaglia, where stood his country seat as a Corsican nobleman. During his exile he also built a third in England.

In the time of King Theodore, the national council had engraved round the gold and copper coin, *Monstra te esse Matrem.*

Napoleon delighted in saying that the Blessed Virgin was the

(1) Pascal Paoli heard mass every day in Corsica, and later on in England, in a chapel which he himself built in honour of the Blessed Virgin.

Queen of his country, and while he was only a simple officer, he testified great devotion for a French Madonna which was in the Ursuline convent at Auxonne, and often prayed there. That image of the Blessed Virgin has since been removed to the parish church, where it is still to be seen.

Through the saturnalia of the Regency, and the corrupt reign of Louis XV., the end of the eighteenth century was attained, when religion had been chilled by the impure and sneering breath of bad philosophy. The revolution of 1793 came to drive away the blessed Virgin from her altars, and God from his temples. The order was given to shut up the churches, and to demolish everything that resembled a Christian image. Alas! it was a sad spectacle to see the Calvaries pulled down, and the poor little Madonnas mutilated, which were so chastely sheltered under the green leaves of the woods. It was particularly in Lower Britanny that the devastation found objects to work upon. "It may be affirmed without exaggeration," says M. Emile Souvestre, in his interesting work on the Bretons, "that in certain localities, our cross roads are paved with broken statues of saints; it is a complete macadamisation with heads, bodies, and limbs of Christian statues." Those miserable days witnessed great profanations, but also noble traits of self-devotedness worthy of ancient times. Britanny, above all, offered a passive, compact, and tenacious resistance, which succeeded at last in tiring out persecution itself. It yielded neither to anger nor fear. As he passed by the niches widowed of their Madonnas, the Breton peasant took off his broad felt hat sorrowfully and piously, and went on his way saying the *Ave*. On Sunday, he seated himself before his door with his family, and remained in profound silence, with his eyes fixed upon his village church,[1] where he had so often invoked Jesus and Mary. "I will have your steeples pulled down," said John Bon Saint André to the mayor of a village, "that you may have no more objects to remind you of your former superstitions." —"You will be still obliged to leave us the stars," answered the

(1) Voyage dans le Finisterre.

peasant, "and they are seen farther off than our steeple." Their devotion deprived of altars took the character of something exalted and melancholy, which was sympathetically allied with the religious ruins with which their country places were covered. The Blessed Virgin, who had disappeared from their village churches, had taken refuge under their thatched roofs, and below her little statues of clay, a hundred times more respected than the household gods of the ancients, was read, "Holy Mother of God, be thou the protectress of this dwelling." And I know not if a *blue* would have dared to break this image, placed under the shadow of the domestic hearth; for there was often an old carbine behind the green serge curtains of the Breton farmer; and if Britanny is the land of religious sentiments, it is also that of strong and lasting resentments. There has remained a little of the Celtic rust on the gold of the virtues of these good people; this people, for instance, is the only one of Christendom who ever took it into their heads to associate the name of the merciful Virgin with an idea of vengeance; and to build chapels under the strange title, more Druidical than Christian, of *Our Lady of Hatred.*[1]

Pilgrimages to the Blessed Virgin were not discontinued in Britanny during the reign of terror, only they were enveloped in a Gallic form. They took place by night, over desert heaths, where the *menhirs* and *dolmens* of the God *without a name* stood up, covered with their gray moss, like phantoms. Each pilgrim held in his right hand a rosary, and in his left a torch; and all these faces pale and half veiled by their long hair, or by the bands from their white head-dresses, passed slowly along the heaths, singing a canticle to the Blessed Virgin. Sometimes a republican column, lying in ambush in the outskirts of a copse, or behind a hedge of thorns and hazel bushes, which sloped down upon a hollow pathway, fired upon the rustic procession. The

(1) "A chapel erected to Our Lady of Hatred is still in existence near Treguier, and the people have not ceased to believe in the efficacy of the prayers said in it."—(Les derniers Bretons, par M. Souvestre, t. ii.)

Breton peasant nevertheless began his perilous devotions again a few days afterwards. In a neighbouring province, the villagers who went to pray to God and Our Lady at the bottom of some sequestered ravine, in a starlight night, passed along the hamlets occupied by the *blue* soldiers, singing hymns to the Blessed Virgin, set to republican tunes.

All this time the churches in cities were suffering pillage. They took away gold, silver, iron, screens, marbles, and carved work; they pulled down every work of art which decorated the walls, they tore up the pictures, and well paid workmen were ordered to remove all sculptures from the walls and vaults; they even took down the bells, to turn them into money, and this *patriotic* coinage cost the state, according to its own avowal, twenty millions.[1]

"Fools!" says Laharpe, addressing his bold and biting words to the perpetrators of these sacrilegious devastations, "fools! is it on walls that faith is graven? is it on pictures that religion is written? It is written on men's hearts, where it is out of your reach; in consciences, where it condemns you; in the spectacle of the universe, where it speaks to all men; in heaven, where it will judge you. Feeble destroyers! you have cried out—Victory! but where is your victory now? Every day you gnash your teeth with rage, as you behold the concourse of people who fill our temples: they are no longer rich, but they are sacred; they are bare, but they are full. Pomp has disappeared, but worship has remained; men no longer tread there upon marble and precious carpeting, but they prostrate upon rubbish, and weep over ruins."[2]

The beautiful canticle of Mary,—"Vierge, en votre secours, je mets ma confiance,"—was the hymn of the scaffold. In 1793, two tumbrels full of poor royalist women, for whom the horrible guillotine was erected, passed by a civic banquet, served up in the street by the leading men of the terrorists. Madam de

(1) Laharpe, du Fanatisme dans la langue revolutionn., p. 49.
(2) Ibid., p. 44.

Montmorency Laval, venerable for her virtue, respectable for her fine name so illustrious in remote ages in France, was in one of these carts, with her hands tied behind her back, with sixteen of her nuns, for she was abbess of the Carmelites of Montmartre, a religious order founded in the East, under the patronage of Mary, as we have said elsewhere. These holy daughters of the Blessed Virgin, whom the tempest of the revolution had cast upon the stormy sea of the world to perish, were singing—as if they had been still hidden beneath their veils in the choir of their beautiful church—the prayer of the Vendeans, the canticle of their holy patroness. Could not these noble women, who were going to die, be allowed to sing in peace? The hideous rage of those wretches who disgraced the Republic is excited on hearing this pious canticle; a hundred terrorists, in red caps, rush up to the carts, with bludgeons in their hands, crying out, "Silence the beguines! Let them sing the *Marseillaise!* . . . Obey the people! . . . Come on! the *Marseillaise* directly!" As if they had not heard these frightful vociferations, the daughters of Mary continued their sweet canticle. Provoked at this passive resistance, which they did not expect, these precious bandits stop the horses with curses, and are going cowardly to strike poor helpless women, who are so soon to be the prey of death; but there is so much honour and chivalry in the French, even when they go wrong, that some other republicans run up, calling out, "No murder! what, kill women! O what a shame!" Then there was a terrible fight around the tumbrels. A young patriot, in a Phrygian cap, snatches a sword from one of the mounted police, and standing quite close to the cart, where the terrified Carmelites pressed close round their venerable abbess, he succeeds in warding off the blows which are intended for them, with as much courage as coolness; but one of those blows has taken effect in spite of his efforts; a young nun is struck, and wounded in the breast, with a cut of a sabre. Her life was departing with her blood, which flowed in a great stream upon her black dress, and the paleness of death had already spread over her meek and patient countenance. "Saint, who art going up to

heaven," cries out a woman from among the people, kneeling before the expiring nun, "bless me!" "Be thou blessed," replies the Carmelite daughter, in a faint voice; "and you who have defended us on the way to death," she continues, as she presents her rosary to the republican, who is deeply affected, "accept this token of gratitude . . ."

The carts moved on again, and the singing began afresh; when they had ceased, all the hearts of these poor women had ceased to beat, and Mary had received to her bosom her faithful servants.

The revolution carried away in its whirlwind the religious orders consecrated to Mary, as the storm destroys many useful plants; that of the Carmelites left behind it something like the perfume of the dried rose, a salutary and balsamic water which bears its name.

Out of seventeen hundred thousand sacred edifices which covered the soil of France, each having an altar of the Blessed Virgin, there remained hardly two thousand churches worthy the attention of the antiquary and the artist; the rest sold, bought, pillaged, pulled down, thrown into the kiln to make quicklime, scarcely left a few remains, the sources of long and fruitless regrets! "See then," exclaims M. Jules Janin, with generous indignation, "see then, what imperfect ruins are the end of so much money, so much patience, so much genius! The cities have been dishonoured. Deprived of these masterpieces, what does a community of men resemble? It is no longer a city, it is an ant-hill. They have dishonoured the landscape which derived so much beauty from these spires, these steeples, and these high walls; what they could not pull down, they defiled at pleasure. Of the noblest Gothic towers they made magazines; of the most correctly built churches they made stables. . . . . That fabulous epoch was so perverse and inexhaustible in its spirit of universal destruction, that it is difficult to believe in it at all!"[1]

The religious veneration of Mary, which had slumbered for a

(1) M. Jules Janin, La Normandie.

short time in France, soon awoke again, and imperceptibly recovered its consoling power over souls. Napoleon, faithful to the impressions of his youth, chose the day of the Assumption for his own patron feast, and made it the greatest of the empire; there soon reappeared processions, crosses, white banners, and sacred hymns in those fine Gothic cathedrals of Mary, of which the bare walls and poor altars brought to mind the primitive church, while their brilliant stained-glass windows, their light columns, their towers proudly carried up to the clouds, spoke of the believing and chivalrous epoch of the times of faith. All that had suffered, all that had mourned, all that had trembled under the fearful reign of terror, came to kneel at the feet of Mary; the reaction of religion was energetic and immense, and made itself felt in the towns and villages. The Blessed Virgin had again rustic altars in the depths of the forests; her sanctuaries, where nothing had been heard for a long time but the song of the bird, or the humming of the bee flying about the pale rose of the sweetbriar, resounded once more with the canticles of pilgrims. The Restoration, by re-establishing the processions of the Vow of Louis XIII., placed France again under her empire; a giant step was made in the devotion to the Immaculate Conception, and the whole of France consecrated to the Blessed Virgin the month of flowers, of which she has made, piously and poetically, the Month of Mary. The highest classes set the example of devotion to Mary; the descendants of the knights *without fear*, and of the great barons, who in ancient times built in her honour so many chapels and monasteries, still honour her as in the good old times; the pious and noble Queen Mary Amelia sets the example.

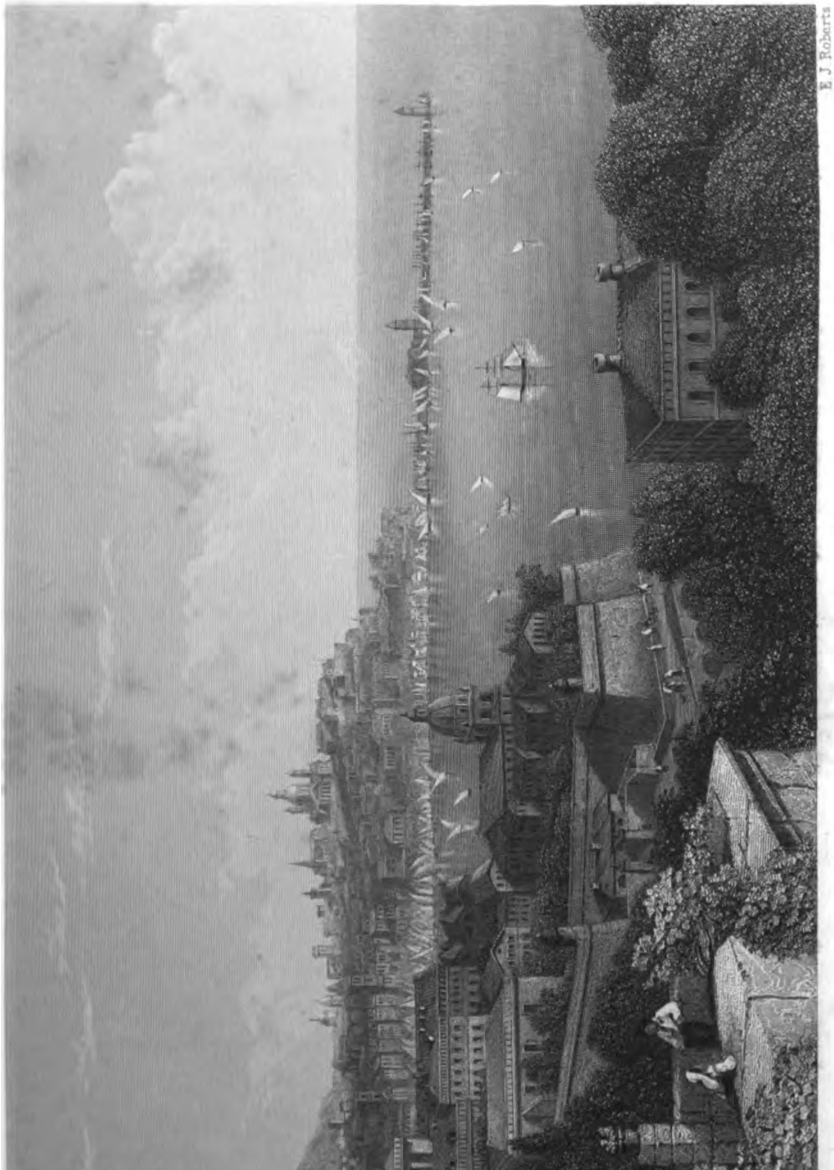
In France, devotion to Mary is tender, but respectful; a Frenchman always beholds the Blessed Virgin in heaven, and honours her accordingly. In Italy, the veneration of the Madonna has something more ardent in its character, and at the same time more familiar. From his cradle, the Italian has under his eyes graceful pictures, which bring to his mind acts of goodness and mercy only on the part of Mary; she is the protectress

of childhood, the dream of youth, the last hope of the sinner; everywhere the thought of her is uppermost in religious festivals, like the rose of nénuphar on the deep waters; the ardent Italian sees her everywhere, blesses her everywhere, and when his prayer is not heard, far from blaming Mary, he says, striking his breast, "It is my own fault! the Madonna has not heard me, because I am too great a sinner." Surely that is an admirable faith! above all, a Christian faith, for in the like circumstances the pagans used to drag their gods through the mire.

Devotion to the Blessed Virgin, which produced in the middle ages the *duomo* of Pisa, that fine cathedral of Mary, the bronze gates of which, executed after the designs of John of Bologna, represent the principal scenes of the life of Our Lord and the life of the Blessed Virgin;—Our Lady of Flowers, the sumptuous metropolitan church of Florence, which looks like a mountain of marble of divers colours sculptured in the form of a Latin cross; —and so many other masterpieces in the highest style,—is as fervent now as at that period, the most illustrious of modern Italy.

On landing at Genoa—that city which so justly bears the name of superb, and which seems to have been built, as Madame de Stael said, for a congress of kings—the first thing that strikes the eye is the devotion of the Genoese to the Blessed Virgin. At every corner of those streets, which are formed of palaces, and are thronged by crowds of the common people in their picturesque costume, and women in their long white veils, rises a Madonna, either painted or carved, who protects the whole district; by day she is embalmed with the strong scent of myrtle or jessamine; by night a lamp is lighted before her, and numerous groups kneel at her feet to recite her Litanies. It is still like the time when Andrew Doria said the office of the Blessed Virgin on board his galleys, and there is still to be read on the gates of the majestic city, *Citta di Maria.* There are reckoned in this city fifty oratories dedicated to the Blessed Virgin.

Venice, the dethroned queen of the Adriatic, would not send a vessel to sea without adorning it with the holy image of Mary.


Vacher
E J Roberts

During the cholera, the city took refuge in the merciful bosom of Our Lady of Salvation, whom she implores even in preference to St. Mark, her patron, in great calamities; and made an offering to her of a superb silver lamp weighing a hundred and sixteen pounds, richly ornamented with gilt sculptures. The fine church of Mary, where the *ex voto* was hung up, owes its origin to a benefit of the same nature. It was erected in 1531, on the site of a house where the plague had broken out, from which Venice was delivered by the all-powerful intercession of the Madonna. In the centre of the cupola appears this inscription, of noble and antique simplicity, *Unde origo, inde salus.*

Nothing can be compared to the tender veneration which the Tuscans entertain for the Madonna. On the roads, on the bridges, in the streets, in the houses, her sweet image is found again and again smiling on the passer-by, who takes off his hat before it, and seeming to take part in every happy event of the domestic hearth. The *contadine* of the environs of Florence come down from the heights planted with fruit-trees, and watered by clear streams which flow half round it, at every feast of the Blessed Virgin, driving a mule elegantly harnessed, which they have laden with baskets of the finest grapes, with little bunches of wheat, with branches of orange and pomegranate-trees loaded with fruits or flowers. Dressed in their holiday suits, they go in procession through the city, and proceed to lay their fruits and flowers at the foot of the altar of the Blessed Virgin.

When the Grand Duke of Florence re-entered his territories, at the fall of Napoleon, his first care was to repair to the Church of Santa Maria della Nunziata, where a great concourse of people go every day to honour most devoutly a picture of the Blessed Virgin, said to have been finished by an angel. In gratitude for his unhoped for return to his dominions, the excellent prince suspended a lamp of the most beautiful workmanship in the chapel of Mary.

Rome is no less devout to the Madonna than Florence. At whatever hour of morning or night you walk about the vast city of Saint Peter, you always find groups of Romans kneeling before

the Madonna, and praying to her with a devotion and fervour truly remarkable. In the streets, in the public squares, in the houses, you see her image, before which one or more lamps are burning, filled with the purest oil; the poor man as well as the rich takes upon himself this expense, he would go without bread to provide it. It is a spectacle at once edifying and picturesque, to see a street in Rome brilliantly lighted by thousands of luminous specks, like the fire-flies of Italy, and resounding with the rustic music of the *pifferari* of Calabria or the Abruzzi. At all times these mountain musicians assemble a great concourse of people at the foot of the Madonnas, but especially in Advent; for they seem anxious to introduce by their rural airs the feast of the shepherds, the most holy night of Christmas.

But it is particularly on the day of the Assumption that the ardent devotion of the Romans to Mary is displayed; on that day all the churches are deserted for St. Mary Major, the royal church, the walls of which are lined with the marble of Paros; the villa of the nobleman is abandoned with its salubrious air and delicious shades; the *aria cativa* prevails at Rome, and with it fever; but what matter? the plague might be there, and people would still go thither. Is not the Madonna more powerful to protect, than fever and pestilence to destroy? O pious confidence! faith truly marvellous in these our days! The whole population of Rome is assembled in the squares, near the superb church of Mary; they make the most magnificent appearance for this festival. The men have put on their picturesque costume of blue velvet; the women have adorned themselves with their coral necklaces, and bound up their long hair, black as ebony, in a white and graceful drapery, fastening it with a gold or silver pin. All carry enormous nosegays, which they come to offer to the Madonna. This immense crowd of the faithful, this people, of whom Mary is the absolute Queen, kneel down in the hot dust, burnt up by the devouring rays of an Italian sun, or stand against those houses which cast a shadow over these open squares. The Italians who are born to be noisy and gesticulating, those men who seem to be always placing themselves in

some attitude for a painter, have forgotten their habits: one single care occupies their minds, which is prayer! And how well do they understand how to pray! They pray with their looks, with their gestures, with their lips, with their heart, and pour out really, without any exaggeration of language, their whole soul at the feet of Mary.

When the pope has finished the divine sacrifice, and blessed all the people on their knees, the wide gates of the vast church roll slowly on their brazen hinges, to make way for the crowd, which fills it with sweet singing and odoriferous flowers. When evening is come, the whole city is illuminated, and all Rome is praying in the street. Each one falls into a group, without distinction or privilege, with a fraternization worthy of the age of gold, around his own Madonna, the Madonna of the district, for which the Roman prince has left his marble palace, the artisan his shop, and the young maiden her father's roof; all pray with affecting fervour. The women recite the rosary, the men sing the litanies; now and then, one of those fine Italian voices, which seem to come down from heaven, intones a canticle to Mary, and every one is silent to listen to it; but that silence is still a mental prayer to the Blessed Virgin.

"I shall remember as long as I live," says a modern traveller, "the beautiful feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, and the evening of the 8th of September, on the Piazza di Navona, where there were from ten to twenty thousand souls moving about. The image of the Madonna, magnificently illuminated, presided over the rejoicings of the people, and no one could doubt of it, when they saw everywhere decorum, restraint, and a kind of half-recollection of spirit; the abode of a numerous family, subject to the authority of a father, alone can give the idea of a like serenity in the midst of the movement of public rejoicings; it was also remarkable at the moment when the crowd retired in peace after the fireworks. I thought I there beheld a proof of the wisdom and mildness of the pontifical government."

At Naples, in sight of the finest sea and fairest sky of the world, devotion to the Blessed Virgin still blooms with the fresh-

ness and splendour of a new-blown lily. The feasts of the Madonna are popular feasts, full of enthusiasm and joy; her churches to the number of forty, in the city of Naples alone, combine all that painting, architecture, and sculpture have been able to display of luxury and grandeur; the chapels of Mary, all beautiful and splendid, are adorned with lapis lazuli, topaz, jasper, and other precious stones. In the church of *Santa Maria Nuova*, the miraculous image of the *Madonna delle Grazie* is placed under a silver canopy, and covered with precious stones. On the hill of Pausilippo, the church of *Santa Maria Fortunata* occupies the place of an ancient temple of Fortune, where paganism used to hang up its *ex votos*. The hill Rulignano is crowned with one of the finest Neapolitan churches in honour of Mary. Five suburbs of Naples bear the name of the Blessed Virgin. The Neapolitans have consecrated Vesuvius to her, that beautiful mountain, the base of which resembles the gardens of Armida, and the summit, one of hell's gates thrown open over some desolate corner of chaos. When the crater vomits forth its long streams of burning lava, and the whole bay is lighted up in the middle of a dark night, as if the final conflagration, predicted by the sybils, was about to destroy our little globe, the Neapolitan, threatened with destruction, takes courage when praying to Mary, and the inhabitants of the hamlets near the volcano run to meet the lava with images of the Madonna, which they hold up against its ravages.

Sicily is still, as well as Sardinia, a land essentially Catholic; the veneration of Mary is particularly cherished at Palermo and Messina; the beautiful cathedral, which the kings of the Norman race dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, still remains in this latter city; only the *campanile* and the spire, which surmounted the great tower which rests on the front, were thrown down in the famous earthquake of 1753, and the Sicilians have not thought of rebuilding them.

In Piedmont and Savoy, Our Lady is ever religiously honoured. In 1669, the King Charles Emmanuel declared the Mother of God the principal protectress of his house and domi-

nions; this declaration has often been renewed by the pious successors of that prince.

Down to the end of the eighteenth century, the veneration of Mary was universal and splendid in Spain. In the cathedral of Toledo, placed under the invocation of the Blessed Virgin, the chapel of Our Lady *del Sagrario* (of the sanctuary) was an object of admiration. The pillars and pavement were of marble; the form was octagonal; in the recesses were seen vases of gold, enriched with diamonds and other precious stones of great value. The statue of the Blessed Virgin, who held in her arms an infant Jesus of twelve inches high in massive gold set with diamonds, was of massive silver, and she was seated on a throne of the same metal. The cathedral of Seville had for her part the celebrated chapel of Our Lady of Kings, built by St. Ferdinand, the richness of which was so great that it passed for the finest chapel in the world. The chapel of the Presentation, at Burgos, was almost as celebrated. At Madrid, the church of Our Lady of Almemada is one of the most magnificent of the city; to this Madonna was attributed the discovery of a heap of wheat, providentially found at the bottom of a tower, at a moment when the city, closely besieged by the Moors, was ready to perish by famine. The miraculous fact still remains painted in fresco on the walls of the chapel of Our Lady; but we doubt if the altar and rails of massive silver are there still.

At a quarter of a league from Madrid, in the enclosure of a vast convent of Dominicans, which, no doubt, is now deserted, like many others, they used to go to venerate the miraculous image of Our Lady *d'Atocha* (of the bush), a dark Madonna, usually dressed as a widow; which has never been done, as far as we know, anywhere but there, but which on solemn days is attired in royal robes, adorned with precious stones. Her chapel, dark from its construction, was lighted by a hundred lamps of massive silver and gold; the Catholic kings had their tribune there, with lattice work before it. It was at Our Lady *d'Atocha* that the *Te Deum* was sung for victories.

Charles III., King of Spain, founded an order of knighthood

in honour of the Blessed Virgin, whom he proclaimed *universal patrona de España é Indias.*

In these days the bright moon of Christianity has slightly veiled her disc in Spain; but the cloud will pass away, and the Blessed Virgin will soon recover her rights in this nation essentially religious and chivalrous; we hope, like the Spanish doctor, who has done us the honour of translating this work, that posterity will add numerous pages, *pages of gold*, to the Spanish portion, of the purest veneration of Mary.

In Portugal, of which Mary has been the Queen since the days of King Alphonsus I., the veneration of her is still national and flourishing; she is the born godmother of all the daughters, and her images are venerated in beautiful and rich chapels.

England, where the sects are like the hydra's heads, is beginning to turn her head towards the religion of Rome; numerous Catholic churches are built there, under the modest name of chapels, in every county. In Ireland, quite recently, bonfires were lighted on all the hills, to celebrate, in the style of ancient days, a miracle which took place after a novena to the Blessed Virgin, the wonderful liberation of O'Connell.

The Belgians are still a people devout to Mary; they go as pilgrims to her sanctuaries, and consecrate to her the most charming chapels of their fine Gothic cathedrals.

The Tyrolese line their walls and their houses with events taken from the history of the Blessed Virgin.

Rich and tranquil Bohemia multiplies the images of the Mother of God on her roads and in her cities. At intervals, in the country, a rustic chapel of Mary, at the same time a house of prayer and a caravansera of repose, sets up its pointed roof, surmounted by a cross, as if to signify to the traveller that it offers him a shelter from sun or rain; and this appeal is always religiously listened to.

Austria, with manners simple and pure, with tastes poetic and religious, has remained faithful to Mary, and no where have the sacred ceremonies of her veneration a character more serious and affecting.

Poland is still the kingdom of the Blessed Virgin, whom the Poles invoke, ever since 1655, in their Litanies, under the title of *Regina cœli et Poloniæ.* Her image hangs from the neck of the young Polish women; mothers formerly used to hang it on those of their brave sons when they set off for battle. The great ladies have in their apartments an oratory decorated with the picture of the Blessed Virgin; and that proud Polish nobility, which eclipsed in splendour all the nobility of Europe, did not fail, at the Christmas festivals, to set up in the most conspicuous place of their sumptuous banqueting rooms a bundle of straw, in memory of the deep destitution of Jesus and Mary in the stable of Bethlehem.

The Lithuanians, the last children of the Blessed Virgin in Europe, in the order of time, since they were not converted till the fifteenth century, have also remained faithful to her, in despite of Protestantism, which completely failed with them from the moment that it spoke of suppressing the popular veneration of Mary. It is she who now replaces the fair Saulé, their favourite divinity—that beautiful goddess of the sun, who came forth each day, say the mystic legends of their fathers, from her palace in the East, mounted on a golden car, lighted by a thousand torches of white wax, to give light to the earth, and who had for her attendants *Vakazinnê* (the evening star) and *Aussra* (the aurora). Faithful to the ancient customs of their native land, the Lithuanian women still celebrate their favourite festival of the return of the flowers and the end of the harvest under the auspices of Mary; upon her altars they lay the violets which they go to gather at a distance on the first days of spring, before sunrise; it is she whom they invoke, seated around the last sheaf, when their nimble hands weave hieroglyphics of flowers, or they give, as in the East, a thought to each leaf, and a symbol to every plant. These people, who passionately love the woods, the fields, and above all the beautiful flowers, which they cultivate around their poorest cottages, love far more the Blessed Virgin, who is still the Grand Duchess of Lithuania.

The Russians, who follow the rites of the Greek Church,

profess the greatest veneration for the Blessed Virgin. When they perceive her image, however far off, they prostrate several times, and multiply signs of the cross with extreme rapidity. At Moscow, a statue of the Blessed Virgin, to which miracles are attributed, ornaments one of the gates of the Kremlin; two sentinels, bare-headed, mount guard by it, night and day. The people never fail to uncover their heads respectfully when they pass before this image.

The czars were formerly crowned in the fine Muscovite cathedral of the Assumption, where the bodies of the Russian patriarchs are deposited; the enclosure of the sanctuary was covered with plates of silver and gold; the sacred vessels and episcopal vestments of this cathedral are still of unheard-of richness; the picture of the Blessed Virgin, placed in a large gilt frame at the bottom of this church, figures in processions in a superb carriage all covered with looking-glass, like the coaches which were seen formerly at the coronation of the kings. Four horses richly caparisoned draw this modern triumphal car at a slow and solemn pace.

The Greeks, though schismatics, have still the same respect for the *Panagia;* the Morea has several fine convents dedicated to Mary; the most celebrated is that of the Assumption, on Mount Cylene, a few hours' journey from the celebrated cascade of the Styx, which now bears the name of Mavronero. This convent, which has possessed ever since the eighth century a miraculous picture of Mary, given to it by an imperial princess of Constantinople named Euphrosine, is built almost entirely in a large cavern a hundred and twenty feet high, and equally wide. A narrow and steep descent, made in the side of the mountain, leads to the entrance of the convent, which has, like the strong castles of the middle ages, an iron gate and portcullis, and is further defended by a side wall with numerous openings, and mounted with four pieces of cannon. This narrow path, so easily interrupted, and in which large breaches are made every winter by the torrents, is the only road which leads to the monastery of Mary; this sacred asylum, moreover, where the *Panagia*

has been invoked for so many centuries by the Hellenists, is considered impregnable. In the late war of independence, the celebrated Ibrahim tried to make himself master of it, but in vain. The three hundred monks who inhabit it, having become soldiers through necessity, were able courageously to defend the ancient altar of their Patroness.

The manners of these caloyers, as the Mussulmans call them, are as simple and as pure as at the time of their foundation; they enjoy complete independence; they are laborious and strong, and like worthy servants of the merciful Virgin, they have always held out a helping hand to all who were oppressed or suffering. The monks of Thessaly and of Phocis found, in the fourteenth century, an asylum in the convent of the Assumption, when, pursued by the Turks, they fled, without hope of return, from the beloved soil of their country. In the seventeenth century, the poor monks who escaped from the massacres of Constantinople took refuge in this convent. Finally, in the eighteenth century, when the devastating war which followed the insurrection in the Morea had destroyed all around them, it was to their thoroughly Christian behaviour towards the Turks of Calavrita, to their prayers, and to their giving up a portion of their riches, that they owed the power of saving from apostasy or death a great part of the Greeks of Achaia.

The Klephts, those brave mountaineers who have so valiantly and so long kept the Turks in check, are no less devout to the *Panagia* than the Moraites. For ages of ages, they have had no other places of prayer than some ruinous chapels, which were believed to be haunted by vampires, or some oratory hollowed out in the rock, under the protection of the Virgin. They have been seen at times, at daybreak, climbing the highest points of their lofty mountains, with their curved daggers in their girdles, and their long guns slung over their shoulders, to go and hear mass, or merely to pray in some retired chapel, which hung over frightful precipices, the very sight of which would have turned a Turkish soldier giddy. There it was that they came to hang up the votive offering promised to the *Panagia* in the hour of

danger, and always faithfully rendered. These offerings, which were oftentimes precious things conquered by gun and sword from the Mussulmans, inspired the most religious respect; public devotion guarded them, and no degree of distress or want could put the thought into the mind of a Klepht to carry off the least of these objects which had become sacred. M. de Pouqueville quotes, in his travels in Greece, the incident of a chief of banditti who, having pillaged some votive offerings from a chapel dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, near Vonitza, was given up by his own *pallikares* to Ali Pacha, by whose order he was hanged. Devotion to make pilgrimages to a distance, difficult as it was to men placed in the position of the Klephts, was still not unknown to them. The famous partisan Blachavas, at the age of seventy-six years, was seen to set out on foot for Jerusalem, with his musket on his back, followed by his *proto-pallikare* (aide-de-camp), and die, as he seemed to have wished, in the holy places which possess the tombs of Christ and the Blessed Virgin.[1]

Mount Athos, called by the modern Greeks *Agion Oros* (holy mountain), is still Mary's, as in the time of the first Cæsars of Byzantium.

The isles of the Bosphorus and Archipelago contain numerous but poor convents of Mary; the bells of these monasteries of the Greek rite are hung from the aged trunk of some cypress of prodigious size, which stands up like a phantom close to a church or a cemetery. At Scio, the most beautiful island of these seas, almost all the population were Catholics. Mildly treated, thanks to the powerful protection of the Sultana Valiolé, the charming isle had preserved its religion, its cheerful aspect, and its beautiful shades. The stranger was welcomed there by the offering of branches laden with fruits, and at his departure flowers were offered to him as a remembrance of hospitality. Nothing could equal the pomp of her festivals. She had her Catholic archouts, like Athens of old; her daughters were fair and pure, like the smile of Mary, their well-beloved *Panagia*. The revolution broke

(1) Fauriel, Chants populaires de la Grèce.

out . . . . all this joy, all this peace ended in a massacre . . . . thirteen hundred young maidens, the most comely of the island, had their throats cut, without mercy, by the savage Osmanli soldiers, on the shore of their bright sea. They fell, one after another, with their hands joined, their eyes fixed on heaven, invoking the Blessed Virgin, who does avenge them; for the tiger, who had ordered these atrocious executions, Ali Pacha, being burnt, both himself and his vessel, by the intrepid Canaris, soon came to die on that same shore which he had inundated with blood, and the conqueror returned solemn thanksgiving to the Blessed Virgin for his victory.

In Anatolia, and in the islands adjacent, at Cyprus, at Tenedos, the Greek race has preserved the veneration of Mary in all its fervour. Mahomet has triumphed in the cities; but on the tops of the hills, in the region of the clouds, the sacred banner of the *Panagia* is displayed in the lofty monasteries. Some of the Greeks have forgotten the language of Demosthenes and Isocrates, but not the Gospel, not devotion to Mary; and they recite in Turkish the symbol of their faith, and the Angelical Salutation.[1] There they have bonfires, to which they have given the name of the adopted son of the Blessed Virgin, in opposition to the illuminations of the Courban-Baïram; and the feast of Our Lady of Mount Olympus, instead of the feast of Mahomet.

The Georgians, who bear on their standard the picture of St. George, and who alone, thanks to their indomitable courage, entered Jerusalem in the middle ages, with banners flying, to perform their devotions, without paying the tribute imposed upon other Christians,[2] the Georgians are still faithful subjects of the Blessed Virgin, the heavenly Queen of their mountainous country; the highest peaks are everywhere crowned among them with a church or a chapel of Mary, placed so high that they cannot at all times reach it themselves, and are obliged, says

(1) Occident et Orient, par M. Barrault.

(2) F. de Belleforest, liv. ii. c. 5 de son Hist. univers.; Chalcondyle, liv. ix. de l'Hist. des Turcs.

Chardin, to content themselves with profoundly saluting it from the bottom of their valleys, which they never fail to do.

The Mingrelian, who sleeps with his head resting on his carbine, and his scimitar by his side, goes to venerate certain relics of the Blessed Virgin in his churches, which he has kept there with great respect from the first ages of Christianity.

Armenia, locked up in the midst of Mussulman people, has no more bent before the Koran than before the Zend-Avesta, and has remained nearly as it was in the fifth century, after the holy wars, except that it has divided into two camps, one professing Christianity with Rome, the other with Nestorius. By both, the Blessed Virgin is religiously honoured. Every Armenian fasts fifteen days before the feast of the Assumption, which was introduced very early into the regions of the Caucasus; and as this people has retained from the Jews the immolation of animals, there is not, on that day, any good Armenian family who do not kill a lamb in honour of Mary.

Libanus, that fine mountain of a hundred leagues in circumference, the western base of which is bathed by the Mediterranean, and which is bounded by Palestine on the south, is quite peopled by Catholics. On one of the elevated levels is the village of Eden, abounding in limpid waters and cool shades; an archiepiscopal church overlooks it; in this church is an altar raised in honour of Mary, and it is on the right of this altar that the *Nakar-Rossena* (principal river) rises in a manner quite wonderful, which flows from an immense rock, bristling with cypress-trees. The *Nakar-Kadisha* (holy river), the child of eternal snows, which formerly beheld on its banks so many solitaries employed in carving the image of Mary in cedar, still shoots down from the greatest heights in foaming sheets, and keeps the name which it owed, in the first ages of the Church, to the piety of the hermits of its rocks. At one hour's journey from the place where the Holy River reunites its rapid and roaring waters, rises up Tyre, the ancient mistress of the seas; its celebrated cathedral of Notre Dame, destroyed in the last wars of the Crusades, a short time after its re-construction, is now only



W. H. Bartlett. S. Bradshaw.

a magnificent ruin, the great roofs and arches of which stand out from the blue sky of Syria, and whence are heard, like a prophetic lamentation, the distant and regular noise of the waves; but in a church less striking in appearance, the four or five hundred Catholic families who inhabit Tyre still fervently invoke Mary. The beautiful city of Nazareth, which is approached by a fine avenue of olive-trees, is peopled by Catholics; its church with three naves, built over that of St. Helen, is always full of pilgrims and faithful engaged in prayer. The sweet name of Mary is everywhere read on the walls, images of her are found everywhere, which the piety of the Oriental Christians delights to adorn with the fairest flowers.

Modern Jerusalem, the populatiom of which seems formed out of the wreck of nations, and which beholds in its bosom the Jewish synagogue by the side of the mosque of the Mussulman and the church of the Christian, is not, Heaven be praised! destitute of altars in honour of Mary; the descendant of the kings of Juda is still invoked kneeling in the capital of the holy king David, and all religious mists disappear at the foot of her tomb, where the Armenian, the Georgian, the Arab, the Tyrian, and the Western Christian meet together, and where even Turkish women are seen praying beneath their veils. A Greek monk pours drops of essence of roses upon the heads of those who come to honour Mary.

The veneration which is paid to the Blessed Virgin in the Levant has even reached the infidels. The Turks and Persians, who speak of her in the most honourable terms, regard her as the purest and most perfect woman who ever existed. Thus they have often been seen to hang up votive lamps before her images, to bring their sick children into her churches, to pray devoutly at her tomb, and, what is still more extraordinary in the worshippers of Allah, even build temples in her honour.[1]

(1) A pacha of Mossoul, besieged by the famous Thamas Kouli-Khan, made a vow to build two churches in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary, if he should be able to save his city; Thamas raised the siege, and the pacha, faithful to his promise, built two churches, the unusual magnificence of which in those countries

In Abyssinia, the veneration of the Blessed Virgin is still as popular as in past times; the churches which bear her oriental name of *Mariam* are met with in great numbers in the cities, on the heights of the mountains, and on the banks of the rivers; they are thatched, surrounded by a gallery outside, and surmounted by an iron cross, the numerous branches of which terminate in ostrich eggs; a cemetery, which is an inviolable asylum, lies round about them, and they are magnificently shaded by dark savins and gigantic olive-trees. In the inside, the walls are ornamented with bright frescoes representing the Blessed Virgin, St. Michael, or St. George—one of the most popular saints of the East; the floor is sometimes covered with Persian carpeting, which the Mussulmans bring from Massaouah, and sell very dear to the Christians. A gallery runs all round these churches, and in the centre is a square sanctuary, to which access is allowed to the priests only; it is there the ark is placed which contains the bread and wine destined for the Communion. The veneration which the Abyssinians entertain for the Blessed Virgin is so great that, according to them, the world was created for her and by her; the feast of the Assumption is preceded among them by a fast of fifteen days, as among the Copts and Syrians; their kings take the title of *son of the hand of Mariam* (Mary), and many of them take her name. In fine, travellers who passed through Abyssinia in 1837 inform us that when the Abyssinians ask a favour, or give an invitation, it is always in the name of Mary; they swear only by Mary (*bè Mariam*), and they have her name always in their mouths.[1]

This ardent devotion of the Abyssinians to the Mother of God has sometimes broken out into absolute acts of fanaticism. In 1714, when certain German missionaries, of the order of St. Francis, sent by Pope Clement XI., endeavoured to bring them back to the unity of the faith, the schismatic monks defeated

enables us to estimate the danger, the fear, and the gratitude of the Mussulman. —(See the letter of the Bishop of Babylon in the Annales de la propagation de la Foi.)

(1) Voyage en Abyssinie, par MM. Combes et Tamisier, 1835-37.

their efforts by getting a report circulated that these religious from Europe were declared enemies of the Blessed Virgin. This falsehood had terrible consequences; the people revolted; the emperor, who protected the missionaries, was poisoned, and the fathers Liberatus, Veis, Piè de Zerbe, and Samuel Bienno, were stoned by an infuriated populace. An Ethiopian monk cast the first stone, crying out, "Cursed, excommunicated by the Blessed Virgin, be he who will not throw five stones at her enemies!"[1] Alas! these poor Franciscans were all the while the most devoted servants that the Blessed Virgin had in the world!

At the present time, the veneration of Mary is extending itself, step by step, in the Indies. The rosary is recited among the Hindoos of the coasts of Malabar, among the Chinese, the Siamese, the Thibetians, the people of Tonquin, and Cochin China; it is the only prayer-book which the Catholics of distant countries possess, and it is the first thing they ask for when they see a priest from Europe.[2] The churches of the Indies often bear the name of Mary; that of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, at Pondichery, is one of the most remarkable. A novena has been established in this church of Malabar, which procures a multitude of conversions, in a country where conversions are so difficult; it opens by a procession, made by night, with great pomp. Altars of repose, which the faithful of Malabar ornament with boxes of flowers, and muslin embroidered with gold, receive, each in turn, beneath the globes of fire which light them up, the holy image of Mary, borne upon a triumphal car. The procession moves along slowly, to the sound of loud music, between two rows of torches. At each altar of repose, while all is silence, a child's voice sings the praises of the holy Mother of our Lord; after which the image of the Blessed Virgin is solemnly carried back to the church, and replaced upon her altar, magnificently illuminated.[3]

(1) Annales de la Propag. de la Foi.
(2) Ibid.
(3) Ibid.

South America is still distinguished for its devotion to Mary. Brazil has built modern churches in her honour, where she has been lavish of ornaments to the utmost of her power. Peru dedicated to her, from the first, its magnificent cathedral of Lima, under the title of the Assumption, and paved it with silver, instead of marble. Cusco, the city of the Incas, has consecrated to Mary its Temple of the Sun, the walls of which were covered with thick plates of gold, and where the image of the god was seen in massive gold, and of extraordinary dimensions. The Dominicans, whose priory church this temple forms at the present day, had built, in honour of Mary, a chapel quite Peruvian, from the brilliant materials with which it was adorned; pavement of silver, altar of silver, statue glittering with gold and pearls, lamps of gold, magnificent votive offerings Spanish and American, nothing was wanting there. Mary had altars no less rich in the ancient temple of *Quilla* (the moon), which the old Peruvians had decorated with silver; in that of *Yllapa* (thunder); and of *Chasca* (evening star). In Mexico, the cathedrals and altars dedicated to the Blessed Virgin are of extraordinary magnificence. The cathedral of the Assumption, at Mexico, begun in the sixteenth century, and finished in the seventeenth, possesses two statues of Mary, which surpass all that Europe can offer that is most splendid of this kind: the first is an Assumption, in massive gold, set with precious stones, of considerable weight; the second, an Immaculate Conception, in massive silver. The cathedral of Pueblo d'Angeles, dedicated in honour of the Immaculate Conception, has a large altar of Mary, which is of itself as valuable as a temple; the altar is of silver, and surrounded by little pillars, with plinths and capitals, of burnished gold.

At Saint Domingo, under French rule, there was made every year, with great pomp, the procession of the Vow of Louis XIII. Since the republic of Haïti has been constituted, this custom has been discontinued, but not so devotion to Mary, whom the blacks still invoke with unbounded confidence. The Haïtians have two pilgrimages to the Blessed Virgin: one in the old Spanish part, and the other in the old French. They often perform them by

deputy; a black pilgrim, who sets out on the pious journey, knocks at all the huts before he begins it, and collects the gifts which each one sends to the Blessed Virgin. The negresses of distinction have imported from Africa a pagan custom, which they have christianised in the Antilles. When they wish to ascertain whether they possess the affection of their husbands, they take to the shore of their bright sunny sea, a light plank of the wood of the islands, pierced with holes, in which they fix white wax tapers, well lighted; after invoking Mary, they launch the little illuminated raft, with all sorts of precautions, upon the waves of their beautiful gulf, and if it swims for a little while upon the waters, without upsetting, they bless the Virgin, persuaded that they may make their hearts contented.

CHAPTER XIV.

INFLUENCE OF DEVOTION TO MARY ON THE FINE ARTS.

Religion has been the mother of the arts in every part of the globe. At her inspiring breath have they been seen to begin, to grow, and arrive at a degree of perfection analogous to the state of civilization of the people, as it was more or less advanced. The religious principle is the only one which is competent to make the understanding productive, to extend the imagination, to impart energy to the will, daring to great enterprises, and patience, which matures our plans, as autumn ripens our fruits. "Irreligion is not so wise; it is," say the Arabs, "a bad, thorny plant, with its roots out of the earth, and with neither leaves nor flowers; nothing weary can repose in its shade, and nothing good grows round about it."

It was in order to have under their eyes more noble images of the divinity, that the people, near the time of the deluge, substituted for trunks of trees and consecrated stones, statues of

marble, brass, and gold; it was to shelter these gods in a suitable manner that they built towers of seven stories high in Babylon, and temples of red granite in Egypt; they thought later on of building palaces. To decorate the wide surface of these temples, they discovered a new art; that of representing the forms of objects by simple outlines, which they heightened with brilliant colours and gold leaf. Greece, intelligent, and passionately fond of the arts, borrowed the art of design and that of sculpture from the ancient land of the Pharaos, and preserved their original destination, while she brought them to perfection.

The invention of music even preceded the art of building, and enlivened the rustic ceremonies of the antediluvian worship. They played on the harp before altars of sods, where the agricultural patriarchs offered the first-fruits of the earth, and the shepherds, who already dwelt in tents, the first-born of their flocks. The grave and religious dance, which represented the revolutions of the heavens, took its origin also among this people given to astronomy; and poetry came to espouse music, to sing the benefits, disarm the wrath, or implore the succour of the Creator. The arts, the principle of which, as the pagans themselves acknowledge, was religious,[1] and the end of which ought to be holy, belied their origin, and got corrupted in their progress. After opening temples to idolatry, they introduced successively effeminacy and licentiousness among the nations: defeat and slavery came of their own accord to close the march. Then it was that statuary and painting produced works not to be looked at without a blush, and that poetry sung of the gods all that they should have buried in silence.

The worn-out springs of pagan society soon left the nations without belief, and the arts without genius. Religious art had contributed to polish their manners, but unbelieving art corrupted them; the former had inflamed their courage, and perpetuated the great traditions of heroism and virtue; the other turned the

(1) I have no doubt that the arts were originally graces granted to men by the gods.—(Hippocrates.)

gods into ridicule, and became the hireling of every vice; the one had prodigies and masterpieces, the other was struck with helpless weakness in the midst of its sad and deep degradation.

Then it was that victorious Christianity planted the sign of our Redemption in the midst of the scattered ruins of the moral world, and placed itself, all at once, not in the rear, but on the summit of men's understandings. It had tempered again the social links, which were falling to dust; washed away sins in the regenerating waters of Baptism, and invited all nations to the banquet of the heavenly Father; it spread out its indulgent arms to the fine arts, as to poor prodigal children, who had foolishly deserted the paternal mansion, to go and seek enthusiasm of the *prince of death*, and holy inspiration of the genius of evil. And the arts, repentant and purified, were re-established at the foot of the cross, by setting *the pearls and diamonds of the holy Scriptures*, by erecting imposing temples to the majesty of the true God, by adorning his altars with venerated images, in fine, by shedding over the rites and worship of the crucified God something imposing, mysterious, and spiritualising, which warmed the heart, steadied the imagination, and gave wings to prayer to ascend to heaven.

The influence of the holy Virgin was felt more than any other, in this surprising transmutation of mire into gold. The veneration of her, fresh as a flower, and remarkably rich in noble and graceful inspirations, was an inexhaustible source of exalted ideas in music, painting, and poetry. The Queen of sorrows and of glories, elevated to a height to which imagination cannot reach, by humility, patience, and virtue, Mary was a celestial type which again took up the Christian idea, and compelled the artist to evoke all the beauties of the world of imagination. Greece had created a whole people of gods; a people beautiful and regular, but hard as brass, and cold as marble. Method, grace, and elegance were met at every turn in these pagan creations; but humility on the summit of greatness, the humility of Mary; but charity on the cross, the charity of Jesus Christ; but the ardent faith of the martyrs dying for truth, which was disowned and

persecuted; modesty, the most excellent, of fears next to that of God; but that divine mercy, which raises up the bruised reed, which rekindles the still smoking flax,—where were they? No one of the foreheads of marble and brass of the sensual divinities of Olympus reflected these exalted virtues. These gods, drenched with nectar, intoxicated with ambrosia, and indolently spending their fabulous days in the midst of feasts, quarrels, licentiousness, and excesses of every kind, bore the desolating stigma of their infernal origin, that of inflexibility.

These ancient types fell before the image of the Blessed Virgin, the mystical rose of the gospel, like the idols of Philisthia before the ark of the God of Israel. The Mother of divine love, the adorable emblem of purity, the woman kneeling on the first step of the throne of Jesus Christ, to offer up to him,—benevolent mediatrix,—the tears and vows of her mortal brethren, caused Christian art to assume an attitude so worthy, so noble, so exalted, that from that time there was an abyss to pass over between that and antiquity.

All that paganism had profaned was sanctified as it drew near to Mary: flowers, stars, hymns, images, and altars. The roses consecrated to the impure goddess, who was adored beneath the tufted myrtles of Mount Idalus, encircled the Virgin of virgins with garlands fresh and odoriferous, the sweet odour of which was a memorial of that of her virtues. The stars,[1] invoked by the ancient nations of the East, formed the ornaments of her celestial crown; the sun, the object of so much idolatry, condensed his rays to form for her a royal mantle; while the moon, beloved by the poets, and adored by the Syrians, humbly placed her dethroned brow beneath the blessed feet of the Queen of heaven and of the angels.

Music, which, according to the saying of one of the ancients,

(1) One of the most beautiful astronomical fictions of the Romans, the constellation of *Virgo*, seems a prophetic revelation of Mary, so much does it correspond with her in different ways. "The constellation of *Virgo*," says a learned man, certainly unbiassed, "is the one which supplies the most emblems and allegories."

no longer produced anything but monsters, was of her own accord simplified beneath the pure and inspiring aspect of the descendant of David. Choirs, composed of brilliant Christian youths, made the roofs of the temples resound with hymns in honour of the Virgin Mother; and those sweet and enrapturing voices, uniting with the sound of harps, lyres, and organs, drew forth new effects from the art of David and Orpheus; for that music, alternately simple and majestic, which expressed the joys of Christ's nativity, and the agonies of Calvary, that music, in which were both ecstasy and tears, glorious dreams and holy sorrows, tended to awaken in the very depths of the heart sentiments the most religious, the most noble, and the most beneficial to society.

God created the lilies to adorn the earth and for his own pleasure, say the Hebrews; the true religion did not trample upon the arts, which are the flowers of the understanding; on the contrary, she cultivated them, and maternally directed their growth. After overthrowing the bloody altars of Esus, Odin, and Irmensul, she instructed, but never persecuted either the scalds of the North, or the bards of Gaul, or the *minnesingers* of Germany.

In the West, when music, long neglected by the nations who hardly loved anything but the clashing of spears, awakened all at once, as from a long sleep, it was under the auspices of Mary. The *cantadours* of Guienne, the troubadours of Provence, the minstrels of England and of Neustria, attempted their first harmonies in honour of the Blessed Virgin. In the classic land of harmony, during a long succession of ages, the Venetian gondolier knew no other *barcarole* than the *madriale*, the hymn to Mary; and the *contadino* of the *campagna* of Naples sung nothing else upon his guitar.

In Britanny, where the Gaulish bards kept their ground longer than anywhere else, hymns to the Blessed Virgin Mary were substituted, almost without any transition, for the terrible and mysterious songs of the Druids. Ballads in dialogue, popular poems on religious subjects, were the foundation of the

national music of a people who seemed to awaken, with their hands joined and on their knees, to a feeling for the arts. Every Breton ballad contained an invocation to the Blessed Virgin, a pious thought, or a sublime moral lesson; for every thing then in the Catholic system combined to moralise the people, and give them a taste for happiness, tranquil and within their reach.

In Wales, in Scotland, and especially in Ireland, there was not a wandering harper who had not some beautiful and simple legend on the miracles of the Blessed Virgin to attract attention in the guard-room of the castle, or beneath the *ormel* of the public square. It was, no doubt, on account of these religious and popular songs, that the apostles of the Reformation, who had no music in their souls, broke the harmless harps of the minstrels, at the same time with the organs of the churches, which they contemptuously called boxes of whistles.[1] In Ireland, a price was set upon the heads of the bards, as well as upon the heads of priests.[2]

Among the Scandinavians, the hymns of the Blessed Virgin had made them forget the warlike and fierce songs of the scalds, of which there remains only the funeral hymn of Regner Lodbrog. The celebrated hymn to the Mother of God, the Boga-Rodziça of St. Adalbert, succeeded in Poland the wild chant of the Waïdelotes. In Lithuania, the hymn to Mary took place of the canticles of Milda, the goddess of beauty, of spring, and of roses. The *bartinikas*, those wandering minstrels of White Russia, who were regarded as inspired, and who presided at the choirs of music of the harvest feast, and of that of flowers, aban-

(1) "Border Minstrelsy."

(2) By an act of Elizabeth, put in force again under Cromwell, and the execution of which was strictly enjoined, every Roman Catholic priest, by the mere fact of being a priest, was considered guilty of treason, and without any further charge, was condemned to be hanged till half dead, for then he had his head cut off and his body cut into quarters; his bowels were torn out and burnt, and his head, set up on an iron spike, was exposed in the public market-place. In 1652, the commissioners of Dublin paid five pounds sterling for the head of a priest, or of a bard.—(M. Feuillide, Lettres sur l'Irlande.)

doned the god Sotwaros, their oriental Apollo, to beg poetical inspiration of Mary.

It was a pious belief of the early times of Christianity, that the Mother of our Saviour took under her special protection those poets whose songs were pure; she was, they said then, *bonorum poetarum magistram.* The verses of Sedulius, an Irish or Scotch poet, who flourished about the year 430, were considered as particularly pleasing in her sight. Fortunatus, Bishop of Poitiers, never invoked any other muse, and his fine *Ave maris stella,* the hymn of shipwrecked mariners, has come down to us, through ages, with the *Salve Regina* of Herman de Veringhen, which the angels, according to the Jesuit de Barry, sung on the margins of fountains, in honour of their Queen, and which the Christians of Antioch intoned on the walls of their besieged city, when they repulsed the attacks of the Saracens.[1]

Soon after the conquest of England, the Normans established at Rouen, under the name of *puys,* or *palinodes,* great contests of poetry in honour of the Mother of God; these contests, over which the *prince,* or the head of the confraternity of Our Lady presided, were the germ of the French academy, and assumed themselves later on the title of the Academy of the Palinodes. An archbishop of Rouen drew up the statutes of this literary and religious company, whose solemn sittings were held in one of the principal churches of the city, and who felt honoured to remain under the patronage of Mary. One strict condition for the laureates of the Blessed Virgin was that the ballads, sonnets, and royal hymns which were submitted to the judgment of the Neustrian Academy should be in honour of the Immaculate Conception, or at least that the subjects of them should be perfectly chaste, and that the praises of the Virgin conceived without sin should be introduced into them.[2] These contests exercised an influence over the poetical productions of the minstrels of Normandy, and gave them a grave and religious tinge adapted to

(1) Histoire des Croisades, par M. Michaud, t. i.
(2) Environs de Paris, t. iii.

the national character, which was at that time serious and chivalrous in a supreme degree. The feast of the Conception, with its sacred poesy, became the feast above all others, *the feast of the Normans.* In the twelfth century, a religious of St. Victor had composed in her honour the Litanies which so well harmonise with the lofty roofs of cathedrals, the majestic sounds of the organ, and the white veils, and the copes of gold brocade, and the roses which are gathered by young children. They were in the middle ages, and the next that followed them, the chant of the pilgrims, who went to some sanctuary built on the sandy shore of the ocean, or imbedded in the granite and basalt of the mountains. That long succession of divine names and graceful appellations, interrupted by those words, so simple and affecting—Pray for us!—was cast upon the wind, which bore away that name, sweet and indistinct, to the depths of invisible valleys, or on the surface of the waves. One might have thought that the angels of God, who kissed the shadow of Mary while living, when they passed by her, as the Spaniard Zorilla poetically says, scattered her praises in the fields of ether.

Christmas carols, those hymns so joyful, which are full of the memory of the Blessed Virgin of Bethlehem, those carols, sung by night, by the light of torches, across the country whitened with snow, or by the side of antique cribs decorated with green leaves and winter flowers, were then the favourite songs of all the provinces of France. The hymns of our churches have impressed on music a noble and severe character, which fills the soul, overwhelms it, and plunges it into the infinite. Christmas carols, more simple in their effect, give it a tincture quite arcadian. It is the song of a bird which soars up cheerfully towards God, to celebrate a mystery of joy; it is a forest perfume which embalms the altar of the youthful Mother of our Saviour. The cheerful and rural poetry which is joined with these charming airs, breathes the shades of the woods, the odour of the white-thorn, the perfume of the bee-hive, and the bleating of the lambs. It is the song of the people, the song of the shepherds, the song of nature herself.

In these carols, Mary is always exhibited as a Virgin quite young, very fair and innocent, who wraps up the King of Angels in her poor veil, and who is too much absorbed in her joy to think of the bare walls of the stable and the straw of the manger. The people, inured to privations of every kind, have not dwelt upon the poetry, but the happiness of the Mother of Christ; it is a picture of Claude Lorraine, where all is light. In the *Stabat Mater*,[1] that prose of the thirteenth century which the Italians have so poetically named *Il pianto di Maria*, the subject is no longer the joys of the Nativity, but the terrors of Golgotha. It is a hymn of agony, the pervading character of which is a mournful depression, mixed with ejaculations which pierce the very soul; it is the poignant recital of the sufferings of a mother, who sees an adored Son expiring before her eyes. To be initiated in the inconceivable dolours included in this composition, and the sorrowful mysteries which it discloses, it should be heard, as we have heard it, in one of those vast churches of Italy, where the people pray with faith and chant with soul; one would say that the majestic notes of the organ are broken by sobs, and that the angels weep over their Queen. No religion, since the world has existed, has furnished poetry and music with a theme like the *Stabat Mater;* the sorrows of Mary at the foot of the cross, call up the full power of harmony and poetic inspiration; this theme, though one of grand effect, as it has been conceived, is still far from perfection; to carry it out to that height would be the last and most sublime effort of art.

Spanish poetry had signalised its revival in the middle ages by hymns consecrated to Mary. In the thirteenth century, Gonzalo de Cerceo, the first known Spanish poet, called himself the poet of the Blessed Virgin; and Luis de Leon created, a little later, lyric poetry in Spain, on purpose to celebrate her worthily. In Germany, very early also, the Tudescan poets had softened

(1) It is thought that the *Stabat Mater* was composed by Innocent III., one of the greatest popes of the church, and the founder of two great orders—the Dominicans and the Franciscans; others attribute it to Jacoponi de Todi, or to St. Gregory, and some to St. Bernard.

down their rude idiom for the Blessed Virgin, whom they celebrated down to the sixteenth century, with admirable faith and delightful simplicity.

Among the great Italian poets of the revival, the most illustrious distinguished themselves by their devotion to Mary. Dante celebrated her in magnificent verses in his "Paradise." "O woman," he exclaims, "thou art so great, thou hast so much power, that whoever desires a favour, and has not recourse to thee, desires that his wish may fly without wings."[1] In the picturesque solitudes of Vaucluse, Lintenno, and Arqua, where Petrarch secluded himself, to await that poetic inspiration of which the tumult of cities prevents the approach, the tower of his little domestic chapel is still seen, which was adorned with a superb Madonna by Perugino. It was at the feet of this fine Madonna that he composed his invocation to Mary, his last *canzona*, so humble, so tender, so Christian, *where his heart kneels* before the *merciful and sweet Virgin*, that she may guide him into the way from which he has wandered, and may commend him to her divine Son at the moment when he shall yield up his soul.[2] Tasso, going from Mantua to Rome, turned out of his way to go and fulfil a vow to Our Lady of Loretto; he arrived there much fatigued with his journey, and in want of money to finish it; but a lucky chance brought thither at the same time one of the princes of Gonzaga, who was much attached to him, and who provided for all his wants. Recovered from his fatigue, he fulfilled with the most fervent devotion all the duties of his pilgrimage, and composed the finest hymn ever made in honour of Our Lady of Loretto.[3]

When stretched upon his death-bed, in the convent of St. Onuphrius, Tasso requested young Rubens, who had freed him from the dungeons of the Duke of Ferrara, to hang round his neck a little silver Madonna, which he himself had formerly given

(1) Dante, Il Paradiso, c. 33.
(2) Le Rime del Petrarca, t. iii. c. 8.
(3) This is the opinion of Ginguené.

to the father of this great painter. "You will take it back," said he to him, "when I shall have breathed my last." Rubens at once obeyed this dying voice, and the author of Jerusalem Delivered, after burning some poetical sketches, conceived during the maddening hours of his unjust and horrible captivity, began to repeat prayers in a low voice, holding in his hands, trembling with the convulsions of his agony, that image, the sight of which encouraged him to die well. When the corpse of the great poet, who had been suffered to want every thing during his life, had obtained the honour of a triumph, Rubens had no heart to join in the procession; he went and hid himself in the most obscure corner of St. Peter's at Rome; and there, prostrate before the altar of the Blessed Virgin, he began to pray with great fervour, holding in his hands that little silver Madonna which he had taken back from the icy hands of Tasso.

Christianity in its birth had respected music and poetry among the pagan bards, only sanctifying their use; error was less indulgent than truth; she had broken harps, she put a stop to singing, and the members of the puritan universities had to swear that they renounced poetry, "that profane and useless art."[1] Here the Reformation was consistent, which, be it said without offence, it was not always. Poetry attracts powerfully to Catholicism, which welcomes all great ideas, and directs without extinguishing them. Poets, who are all ardour and enthusiasm, find themselves under restraint within the four bare walls in which they are confined by Protestantism; their minds want elasticity, and their imagination knows not what to resort to amidst that labyrinth of sects, which are subdivided and ramified, like the hundred and twenty thousand rivulets of Basra. Thus the poets of Germany return in numbers to the true sheepfold of the Shepherd of souls, to the sheepfold of the fine arts, and bend the

(1) The Scotch covenanters despised poetry, which they treated as a profane and useless art. This gross fanaticism lasted so long in some parts of Scotland, that Wilson, the author of a poem entitled The Clyde, appointed, thirty years ago, to the situation of a schoolmaster at Greenock, was obliged to promise in *writing* that he would give up poetry.—(Sir Walter Scott, "Border Minstrelsy.")

knee before the Protectress of sacred song. Schlegel, Tiek, Novalis, Werner, Adam Müller, have returned to the faith of their fathers; and one of their fellow-countrymen, who devotes much ability to the service of a sad cause, said on this subject,—"Alas! this is not all, the painters abjure by troops!"

Painters abjure in Germany? . . . O the reason is, that the same holy influence, which attracts the poet to Catholicism, acts equally upon the painter. "Poetry and painting are sisters," said the wild Salvator Rosa, and he said well. The painter, like the poet, loves what is grand and antique in faith, what is imposing in rites and worship; both naturally incline towards Catholicism, which has protected the cradle of the arts with unheard of magnificence, and which still furnishes them with the finest themes, the grandest conceptions, and the warmest colouring. It is to Catholicity alone that painting is indebted for a type, which has eclipsed the finest types of antiquity; a type of which the great masters of the Italian school caught glimpses, believing artists as they were, in dreams of heaven, beautiful as ecstasies; a type which conducts the Christian artist to the heights of an ideal world, where none can follow him,—MARY!

Painting is, in relation to her sisters, the eldest daughter of Christian worship; she is the first artistic adoption made in the church, and this adoption is the more glorious as it was commenced with Jesus, and continued with his Mother. According to the tradition of the East, the first Christian painting was the sacred face of our Lord, miraculously imprinted on the veil of Veronica; the second, the portrait of the Blessed Virgin, painted by St. Luke. These two revered pictures gloriously introduced the art of Zeuxis into the midst of the primitive Church; thus we find holy pictures of Mary in high veneration throughout the Levant, from the first dawn of Christianity.

Painting, among the Jews, was confined to the representation of flowers and plants; every representation of the animal kingdom had been forbidden by Moses, who distrusted the extreme propensity of that people to idolatry, and who was called to settle them in the midst of a crowd of pagan nations, where the symbol

had made them forget the type. This prohibition was so rigorously observed, in the latter times, that the Romans were obliged to conceal their victorious standards, as they passed through the land of Juda, to avoid wounding the extreme susceptibility of the Hebrews by the sight of their eagles. On the other hand, we read in the Acts of the Apostles, that the converted Jews divested themselves with much difficulty of their national prejudices, and that it was not their doing that the innumerable prohibitions of the law of rigour did not continue under the law of grace. It follows thence, that with the exception of the portrait painted by St. Luke, it is all but demonstrated that the earliest representations of Mary were not the work of the Hebrews; every thing, on the contrary, leads us to suppose that they were the productions of the Ionians, who long possessed the holy Mother of our Saviour at Ephesus, the city of artists, the country of Apelles, and at that time the light of Asia. The Ephesians, in fact, preserved the memory of the Blessed Virgin with the most tender veneration, as is attested by the churches which they so early dedicated to her. In the year 403, the fathers of the general council of Ephesus declared that this great city derived its principal lustre from St. John the Evangelist and the Blessed Virgin. There, they say, John the theologian and the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, were honoured in churches, for which they had a special veneration. This veneration, according to all appearance, had been expressed by holy pictures; for the Greeks were not fond of plunging into anything vague, and their active imagination felt the necessity of seeing the objects presented to their veneration.

The first pictures which adorned the churches of the Syrians and the faithful of Asia Minor were painted upon wood, with colours which rendered solid and brilliant a mixture of melted wax. Such were the famous pictures of Edessa in Mesopotamia, of Seydnai in the vicinity of Damascus, of Didinia in Cappadocia, of Sosopoli in Pisidia, of Philermes in the isle Cyprus, and, in fine, of Antioch. Before these pictures, lamps were kept burning perpetually, and there it was that the great bishops, great

doctors, and great saints of the first ages of the church, came to pray for help and support. St. Alexis lived at the feet of Our Lady of Edessa; St. Basil implored the divine protection, from the fury of Julian the Apostate, before Our Lady of Didinia, and St. Germanus related to the fathers of the second council of Ephesus, the precious favours which it pleased God to grant to Asia Minor, through the intercession of Our Lady of Sosopoli.

Our Lady of Philermes, which attracted a great concourse of pilgrims to the isle of Cyprus, was carried off by the knights of Rhodes, when they were forced to abandon the Archipelago to the crescent; it is still at this day on that impregnable rock where so many chains of Christian pilgrims have been broken, and protected by the lions of England, once Catholic; ah! no doubt the glorious and faithful banner of the order of Malta was more pleasing in her eyes.

Pictures of Mary were multiplied in fresco on a golden ground around the basilicas of Constantinople, and the Greek workers in mosaic contended in efforts and talents with the painters to represent her in a manner more durable, and no less beautiful, in those pictures so cleverly and patiently variegated, which Ghirlandajo called *pictures for eternity*. Greece had for ages the monopoly of frescoes, stained glass, paintings, and mosaics. The first picture of the Madonna which was venerated in Italy, if we believe the tradition of the Neapolitans, was a portrait in mosaic of the Blessed Virgin, executed by Greek artists, on the walls of the ancient church of *Santa Restituta*, a temple of Neptune, converted into a Christian cathedral by St. Aspreno, who passes for having been the first bishop of Naples.[1] Italy for a long time had nothing of its own but barbarous frescoes, where the saints made one shudder, and where the Blessed Virgin had the tint of an Ethiopian. Those Virgins with black faces, which some have attributed to the degenerate pencil of the Greeks, are claimed by the Neapolitans, who give the honour of them to their first

(1) Delices de l'Italie, t. iii. p. 79.

painters; we may leave them to them, without adding any very noble ornament to their artistic glory.

From Cimabue, who founded the Italian school, about the year 1240, to Carlo Maratti and Salvator Rosa, who pass for its latest masters, that is, during a space of five centuries, religious painting produced a long succession of masterpieces, to which the history of the Blessed Virgin contributed the principal part. Raphael, at that time handsome, poetical, and pious as an angel, was the first to discover, in his admirable *sposalizio*, the noble and simple air, the beautiful and serious physiognomy, the celestial attitude of the Mother of divine love and holy mercy. One would say that on some day of fervent prayer Mary appeared to him, seated on the clouds, with her attendant angels, and that he painted her in her glory as he saw her. How many men of genius walked in the footsteps of that great master! Michael Angelo, Correggio, Titian, the Carracci, Spagnoletti, Domenichino, and that austere Carlo Dolce, who had given his pencil by vow to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and that wild Salvator, who made pilgrimages to Our Lady of Loretto. What richness of imagination! what superhuman conceptions! what profound feeling of the sanctity of the art, among the great Italian masters! Those prodigious men, who have disinherited the future, and made us forget the past, not being afraid to show themselves faithful servants of the Blessed Virgin; they lighted up tapers before her images, took off their caps as they passed before them, said their beads like every one else, and their great ambition was to decorate a Christian church with some holy painting, for which they prepared as for some sacred undertaking. "Sound all the trumpets, set all the bells ringing," wrote Salvator Rosa to Dr. Ricciardi; "after thirty years' residence in Rome, after six whole lustres of disappointed hope, and of an existence full of continual tribulations from heaven and from men, I am at length called upon for once to paint a picture for a high altar!"[1] This is extravagant joy, as we see; but then how Catholicity

(1) Lettere di Salvator Rosa, al Dott. Gio. Batista Ricciardi, Lettera 20.

loved, encouraged, and protected that art, which endowed her temples with so many masterpieces! How did the Apostolic See nobly elevate the man of genius to itself! how did it make the distance easy, and do away with all social distinctions, to honour illustrious talents, and make them walk on an equality with great fortunes and patrician birth! Giotto, that shepherd who left his flock in a romantic valley of Tuscany to work in the school of Cimabue, was patronised by Clement V., and it was the successor of St. Peter who sought out the first artist. Michael Angelo, destined by his father to be a worker in wool, was honoured by something more than the favour of Julius II., he possessed his confidence and friendship. Raphael, the son of a poor and obscure painter, was offered on the one hand the cardinalate, and on the other, the hand of a cardinal's niece, the friend of Leo X., that munificent protector of the arts. Lanfranc, that *Parmegiano*, so popular in the eighteenth century, was an intimate friend of cardinals, a knight of the holy Roman empire, and specially patronised by the pope. Caravaggio, the son of a mason, received the cross of the Order of Malta, a superb gold chain, which the Grand Master put round his neck with his own hands, and two slaves to wait upon him. Claude Lorraine, who began as a cook and a grinder of colours, was the friend of the elegant Cardinal Bentivoglio, and the distinguished favourite of Urban VIII. The Roman cardinals expended part of their fortune in masterpieces, which still form the ornaments of churches, or of their splendid galleries; and from their example, all the Catholic princes encouraged the arts, and adorned the altars with religious paintings.

This is what Catholicity has done for painting. The Protestants acted very differently. Calvin, who despised poetry, and even ranked the organs in the churches among *foolish vanities*, inveighed with no less acrimony and vehemence against the *idolatry of painting;* accordingly, religious pictures were torn up without mercy by his savage followers; and this aversion to an art so noble lasted so long, that in the acts passed in the English parliament in 1636, it is enacted that all those pictures in the

royal gallery which represent the Blessed Virgin Mary, or the *Second Person of the Trinity*, shall be publicly burnt.[1] What better could the Caliph Omar have done?

It is worthy of remark that the two leaders of the Protestant sects, while declaiming against Catholic pictures, set themselves up complacently as models to their partisans, and multiplied their own likenesses as much as possible. "Luther," says an Anglican author, "was always much flattered in multiplying his own portrait, and that of his ugly partner."[2] His statue, erected at Wittenberg, is exhibited to the veneration of the Lutherans of Germany, and M. Herminier himself compares that veneration to that which Catholics pay to Our Lady of Loretto. Calvin, possessed by the same strange mania, occasioned this judicious question of Saconay to be put to the Huguenots of France: "Why are you so malicious against statues and paintings? Does not your Calvin delight in exhibiting himself in his likeness, sculptured in Geneva, with so much ability that it vividly represents his face and his sunken eyes, *and shows him up as bad as he actually is?*"[3]

But let us go back to the fairest page of the annals of Christian art, let us return to the influence of Mary over the arts of the middle ages and of the revival. The painters of antiquity had represented physical beauty successfully, they had admirable models for the purpose; but the Christian painters united to harmony of features, the reflection of the soul. The figure of Mary was the triumph of mind over the clay of the body; to represent this heavenly woman, it is not enough to study the moral world, and to represent, in all their variety of shades, the most gentle and noble virtues of the soul; it was necessary to penetrate the mystery of the existence of those glorified beings,

(1) Journals of the House of Commons. In Holland, the aversion of the Anabaptists to images was so great, that besides those which were in the churches, they broke all the pictures which were in the town of Leyden, and effaced even the paintings on walls and windows.—(Delices de la Holl., p. 64.)

(2) Memoire sur la vie et siècle de Salvator Rosa, t. i. p. 10.

(3) Arch. curieuses.

who live not with our life, and are nourished only by holiness, pure love, and divine contemplation: it was essential that the artist, animated by the *fuoco animatore* of religion, should be elevated on the wings of faith, to that white throne where the Blessed Virgin is seated in the midst of saints and angels, and that he should piously invoke his divine model, before he takes up his pencil. It is not enough to be a Christian, one must be a good Catholic to paint Mary; more than one young German artist has felt this before a Madonna by Raphael, and more than one abjuration has been the consequence of that feeling.

It was a just and charming idea of a great foreign painter, M. Overbeck, to represent the Blessed Virgin inspiring and encouraging the arts of the middle ages, and of the revival.[1] But how is it that the chaste Mary, the Queen of sacred harmonies, the divine model of St. Luke, does not more inspire our contemporary artists, our national artists? Some say that the French school wants elevation and genius, we believe rather that it wants faith. People ask why the female saints and virgins, with which our altars are adorned by modern art, are lowered to the rank of ordinary women, and have nothing about them suitable to inhabitants of heaven. The reason is, alas! that

(1) M. Overbeck's picture is divided into two parts—heaven and earth. In heaven, the Blessed Virgin, enthroned on clouds, is surrounded by the angels and saints of the Old and New Testaments—such as Moses, the architect of the tabernacle, David the poet, St. Luke the painter, St. Cecily, &c. In the middle of the terrestrial region is a fountain with two basins, one above the other; a jet from the upper basin shoots up to the sky. This fountain is inspiration more or less elevated. Cimabue, Giotto, Mazaccio, L. de Vinci, Raphael, Dante, &c., are looking at the upper basin; while the colourists, Titian, Paul Veronese, Tintoretto, examine in the lower basin the prismatic effects of light: seated alone upon the steps of the fountain is seen Michael Angelo, absorbed in himself, and inspired by his own genius. In the foreground of the picture is Charlemagne, holding in his hand a model of a Gothic church; St. Gregory, the inventor of the Gregorian chant; artists digging up ancient bas-reliefs and studying them; an architect of the middle ages giving a lesson to young pupils, whose country is recognised by their costume—they are all seated except the Frenchman, he, impatient to learn, is standing up, and examining the master's plans. The title of this composition is, "The Arts of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, under the Protection of the Blessed Virgin."

modern art no longer draws inspiration from the sacred source whence the great masters were wont to draw; and that those vague ideas of religion, which flit in the soul of the artist, like the vaporous shades of Ossian amid the mists, will never inspire him with anything noble. Let him transport his tent to those heights whence Raphael and Michael Angelo caught glimpses of the Queen of virgins, and he will see her in his dreams, pure and ideally beautiful as in times past.

Nor is statuary either without obligations to Mary. Greece had represented her statues seated, standing, and recumbent; but she had not imagined the suppliant posture of Our Lady of Dolours; she had not placed innocence and purity on their knees before God; she confided her beautiful children in marble to female Bacchanalians, or to old Silene. Mary, bearing the infant Jesus in her arms, came to disclose to art and society, at the same time, the religion of maternity, and she opened to sculpture the unexplored career of moralities. Sculpture grew, like her sister, in the classic land of the arts—beautiful Italy; like her sister, she was protected there by princes of the Roman church.

Buonarotti decorated the chapel of the Medici, at Florence, with an exquisite group, in Carrara marble, representing the Blessed Virgin and holy Infant.

It is well known that the favourite subject of Michael Angelo, for sculpture, was Christ dead on the lap of his Mother. In the hours of dark sorrow, the great Christian artist sculptured a *sieta*, that is, a figure of Our Lady of Dolours, of inimitable perfection, which he intended for his own tomb. In fine, in our own days, the celebrated Canova has paid to Mary the tribute of statuary, by a group representing Jesus dead, the Blessed Virgin, and Magdalen, a work where the sculptor of Pius VII. has remained scarcely inferior to him of Julius II.

The influence of Mary over Gothic architecture was less conspicuous than over the fine arts, but it was not on that account the less real. The cathedrals and abbeys, which the middle ages saw erected in her honour, are more delicately ornamented, more

aerial, more graceful, than any others; we see that a thought of filial love prevailed, not only with the founder and the architect, but even with the humble mason who built them.

At that time, poor workmen went their rounds in France, offering their trowels and hammers wherever the piety of the faithful built churches; most of them asked for no salary; they received bread and a few roots, and they lay upon the bare ground. In the course of two centuries, a hundred thousand men were seen working in this manner at the cathedral of Strasbourg, which Bishop Werner had dedicated to Mary.

Some of these workmen devoted themselves exclusively to building chapels of the Blessed Virgin; they worked at them *for the love of God*, and refused all other work. There were some among these who undertook, as an exercise of expiation, to finish a certain number of oak or clover leaves, or arabesques, every day. This pious task was called the chaplet of the *picoteur* (stone-cutter). The enthusiasm even reached the weaker sex; women were seen taking up the chisel to sculpture Madonnas. The statue of the Blessed Virgin, which is observed on the portico of the cathedral of Strasbourg, with a crown on its head, and a chalice in the right hand, is the work of Sabina, the daughter of Ervin, an architect, celebrated like his father and his brother, whose great work he continued after they had consumed their lives upon it.

These artists, who had wrestled like giants with the thought of the infinite, in order to express it in stone, did not enrich themselves in these colossal undertakings, where the diamonds of princes, the rich alms of great barons, and the gold of city corporations passed by millions through their hands;[1] they would

(1) The most renowned architects of those days, says M. Marmier, had not yet learnt, with the art of building edifices, the art of enriching themselves. In 1287, Stephen de Bommeil, being invited to Sweden, to build the magnificent cathedral of Upsal, had not money enough to pay for his journey and take his companions with him. Two Swedish students, who were then at Paris, lent him 40 livres, which he engaged to repay them "on the faith of Bommeil, stone-cutter, master engaged to build the Church of Upsal."

have been ashamed to do so. Their labour was more worthily paid for: after their death, the majestic basilica, which they had built, opening its black marble pavement, gathered them piously into its bosom; and one would have said that its lofty and light spires, which pierced the clouds, like the prayer of a holy soul, went to plead their cause before the Eternal.

Around them slept, at the entrance, and in the shadow of the sacred walls, legions of workmen, who had wrought under their orders. The Church prayed for them and blessed them, from age to age, in their plain stone sepulchres. And this was a recompense worthy of the ambition of spiritual men, who valued life at its real worth.

Oh how carefully ought the preservation of these masterpieces of the ages of faith to be attended to! Never will there be seen again that unity of thought and purpose, which imparts to Gothic churches something so complete, so devout and solemn; never will works of their kind be again executed upon earth; for kings are not rich enough to defray the expense of them, and the elevated and religious ideas which guided the men of ancient days are buried in their sepulchres. To find again the Werners, the Sullys, the Mowbrays, who projected our magnificent cathedrals, the architects who made the plans, the workmen who executed them, and the people who offered so liberally the well-earned gold[1] from their savings for their erection, the globe must undergo a new cataclysm, to purify it from the impiety which corrodes it, and the egotism which degrades it.

The carvers in wood paid equal homage by their labours to

(1) Maurice de Sully had Notre Dame, at Paris, rebuilt; an usurer formed the design to employ a part of his ill-acquired wealth in the construction of the metropolitan church: uneasy, however, as to this way of making satisfaction, he went to consult a holy person, named Peter the Chanter, who, very far from approving of the usurer's restoring to God what he had taken from men, strongly urged him to restore his ill-gotten gains to his debtors. The usurer obeyed, and came afterwards to tell the doctor, that after making restitution to all, he still had a considerable sum left. Then Peter replied to him, "Go, brother, you may now bestow your alms upon churches in perfect security."—(Felib., Hist. de Paris.)

the Blessed Virgin; the stalls of the choir in the old churches were adorned, for the most part, with these carvings, where the artist delighted to concentrate, in a small space, some graceful scene in the life of the Blessed Virgin. The cathedrals of Auch and Evreux, both dedicated to Mary, have had the good fortune to preserve many of these carvings, the loss of which would be irreparable.

Under the roof of the cathedral of Paris, that terrible periodical press, which, according to the passions which animate it, does so much good or evil, was born at that time, like an innocent dove, which does not yet venture to leave the nest which it has made for itself in the hollow of a stone. A large chandelier of iron, with diverging tubes, as high as the level of sight, was fixed into one of the walls of Notre Dame, close to one of those side doors, which are masterpieces of ironwork. On a level with these tubes, supplied with tapers of yellow wax, was suspended, by a flexible chain, a hollow tablet covered with wax. There, every morning, by the instruction and on the responsibility of the chief directors, or editors, of the period, the bishop, the mayor or public officer, the printer, in wax, recorded, with his *stylus*, the official notification of what was particularly interesting to the people of the good old times—the arrival of a bull, a battle gained, &c. Every man of letters was then free to come, by the light of the tapers, which were indispensable in edifices darkened by stained glass, to make known to the curious assembly this gazette, which was a daily one in the full sense of the word, seeing that the news of the next day effaced that of the preceding.

The numismatic art rivalled in zeal both painting and sculpture in representing the image of Mary on medals and coins.

The Empress Theophania, who married Romanus the younger in 959, is the first who presents us the figure of the Virgin on coins. She is placed on the reverse, her head, surrounded by the *nimbus*, wears the veil, and both her hands are raised to the height of her breast; around we read the inscription ΘΕΟΤΟΚΟΣ, that is, the Mother of God.

The second husband of that princess, John Zimisces, who ascended the imperial throne in 969, had also a medal struck, on which appears on one side the figure of Christ, EMMANYHΛ, *Emmanuel!* On the reverse is placed the Blessed Virgin, seated on a throne, and holding the infant Jesus upon her knees. Before her are represented the three wise men bringing him gifts; above the head of the Blessed Virgin is a star, and beneath are two doves.

The first emperor who placed the effigy of the Blessed Virgin on the obverse of his coins, was the Emperor Romanus IV., called Diogenes, who ascended the imperial throne in the year 1068. On these medals appears the Blessed Virgin, having on her bosom the head of the holy Infant, as the Council of Ephesus had prescribed. The Blessed Virgin wears the robes and head-dress of an empress. Round her head, and intermixed with her hair, appear several rows of pearls, and her brow is encircled with the imperial diadem. She keeps the *nimbus* or *aureole*, but does not wear the veil. On the reverse of the medal is seen this inscription: ΘΕΚΟ ΡΩΜΑΝΩ ΔΕΣΠΟΤΗ ΤΩ ΔΙΟΓΕΝΗ, that is, "May she be propitious to the Emperor Romanus Diogenes."

Several emperors also placed the effigy of the Blessed Virgin on their coins after Diogenes; but from John Zimisces to the taking of Constantinople, the letter M is no longer found on the coins of the lower empire.

The Greeks were not the only people who paid this mark of respect to Mary: a great many modern states still bear on their coins the effigy of the Blessed Virgin.

In the Papal states, we see upon the new Roman crown of silver the Blessed Virgin borne on clouds, and holding in one hand the keys and in the other an ark; this inscription surrounds the coin: *Supra firmam petram* (Upon a firm rock).

The city of Genoa displays also upon the gold *genovines*, the Blessed Virgin borne upon clouds, and holding the infant Jesus upon one arm. The inscription is: *Et rege eos* (And guide them). Austria has gold ducats, on which is seen the Virgin borne upon clouds, having upon her arm the infant Jesus, who holds in

his hand the globe of the earth. The inscription is: *Maria, Mater Dei* (Mary, Mother of God.) The same country has also gold *maximilians*, on the reverse of which is the Blessed Virgin carrying the infant Jesus, who holds in his hand the globe of the earth. The inscription is: *Salus in te sperantibus* (The salvation of those that hope in thee). The *carolins*, or gold pieces of three *florins*, of the same power, display also on their reverse the Blessed Virgin holding the infant Jesus, with the same inscription as the *maximilians.*

Bavaria, too, strikes gold *maximilians* and *carolins*, which exhibit the same effigy, the Blessed Virgin, and the same inscription as the *maximilians* and *carolins* of Austria.

Portugal places upon its gold *cruzades* the name of Mary, *Maria*, surmounted by a crown, and encircled by two laurel branches; on the other side is a cross with this inscription: *In hoc signo vinces* (Thou shalt conquer by this sign)

CHAPTER XV.

PILGRIMAGES.

"The devotion of pilgrimages," says M. Michaud,[1] "has been encouraged in all religions; indeed it is intimately connected with a feeling natural to man."

This remark is just and true; in fact, all nations have had consecrated places, to which they have made it a duty to resort at certain periods of commemoration, to become more deeply penetrated with a sense of the benefits received from God, by visiting those spots which they believed to be sanctified by his presence or his miracles.

Pilgrimages are as ancient as society itself; those of the East,

(1) Hist. des Crois., t. i.

as Boulanger very judiciously observes, are almost all connected with reminiscences of the desert; in fact, those pilgrimages, the institution of which is lost in the night of ages, have generally for their object the lofty mountains, where the first nucleus was formed of the great nations of Asia, who would have it that they descended, like their rivers, from the rocky womb of their mountains. The Chinese, who claim to be sons of the mountains, climb on their knees the rugged sides of Kicouhou-chan; the oriental Tartars go to venerate, as the summit of their hordes, Chan-pa-chan, and certain Hindoo Gentiles, the Pyr-pan-jal; the Japanese undertake at least once in their lives the dangerous pilgrimage of Isje, the mountain from which their ancestors descended; the Apalachites, or wild Floridans, go at the return of each season to sacrifice upon Mount Olaïmi, to return their thanks to the sun, who, as they say, saved their fathers from a deluge, &c. These pilgrimages are founded upon traditions corrupted by time, but certainly historical; we find in them the traces, and we see in them the effects, of that thought of profound terror, which found expression in the plain of Sennaar, by the building of the famous tower of Babel. Disheartened by the confusion of tongues, the post-diluvian races, not being able to seek refuge in towers which should reach up to the clouds, settled at least upon high mountains, to save themselves, if possible, from the disastrous chances of another deluge. It was not till the sun failed them, and refused to produce the corn necessary for the food of the rising colonies, that they were seen to settle down in the plains, which they were often obliged to drain before they went into them. Hence comes the respect of the orientals for their sacred mounts—a respect which they prove by annual visits, accompanied with vows, offerings, and prayers.

After reverencing the cradle of nations, they venerated that of religious worship; then those places which reminded them of great events; then the men who became illustrious by deeds heroic or religious. Thus the gratitude of the Jewish people has preserved for so many ages the tomb of Esther and Mordecai, whither all the Hebrews dispersed over Asia have gone in pil-

grimage for two thousand years. A wonderful thing, that the tomb of two exiles, erected by the gratitude of a few captives, should have survived the great empire of the Assyrians, and that it alone saves from oblivion the ruins of Ecbatana.

Man is like the ivy—he must cling to something, something must support him, that he may have courage to live. When he finds neither sympathy nor consolation among his fellow-creatures, he instinctively evokes the inhabitants of a better world, and claims that support from them which society denies him, or is unable to afford him. Nothing better proves this propensity of the soul than the conduct of the Indians, who were oppressed by the first viceroys of Portugal; these people, disarmed and inoffensive, no longer finding either protection or support in the successors of Alphonsus D'Albuquerque, came and sat down like suppliants at the foot of that great man's tomb, to implore of the illustrious dead, reposing beneath the monumental marble, that justice which the living would not grant either to their rights or their tears.

Protestantism, which discolours and pulverises all that it comes in contact with, has not failed to abolish the pious visits which Christians have, at all times, made to those places which Christ has sanctified by his sufferings, or which his Mother has rendered celebrated by her favours. Turks, furious enemies of images, have lighted golden lamps before the altars of Mary; but what Protestant has placed a lamp in the holy sepulchre? what Protestant has prayed before the crib of Bethlehem, where Saladin and the Caliph Omar prayed? These local devotions, they say, are superstitions; God is everywhere. God is everywhere. . . . . Who ever doubts it? Catholics have not got to learn one of the first questions of their catechism; they know, they knew fifteen centuries before there was an apostate monk in the world of the name of Luther, that God hears in every place the prayer of faithful souls, and that in all places such prayer is granted; but what should hinder God from attaching certain favours to those ancient sanctuaries, where he has been pleased oftentimes to manifest his power by prodigies? There were in Judea plenty of

green hills which he might have pointed out to David for the site of his temple, and yet he chose the rocky threshing-floor of Areuna, the Jebusite, because there he had already displayed his mercy;[1] and also, if we may believe a charming tradition, which has survived like a flower of the desert beneath the dark tent of the Arab, because that place had been previously sanctified by a noble trait of brotherly love.[2] Man is, by nature, so imperfect and so inclined to evil, that he has always some expiation to make, before he approaches the source of all sanctity; when this expiation appears to him proportioned to his fault, he feels a surer confidence in the succour of Heaven; thence came the

(1) It was on the threshing-floor of Areuna that, at the prayer of David, the exterminating angel stopped his ravages. "At all times," says a great ecclesiastical author, "God has marked out certain places especially destined to receive the prayers of men. One must be more incredulous in the history of the Church than in any other, not to believe that God has been pleased that his saints should be honoured more especially in certain places, and that to attract people to them, he grants favours there that he does not grant elsewhere."

(2) Jerusalem was a ploughed field; two brothers owned that part of the land where the temple was afterwards built; one of those brothers was married, and had several children; the other lived alone; they cultivated together the field which they had inherited from their father. The harvest time being come, the two brothers tied up their sheaves, and made two equal heaps of them, which they left on the field. During the night, that one of the two brothers who was not married had a good thought; he said to himself, "My brother has children and a wife to support, it is not just that my share should be as great as his; come, let me take a few sheaves from my heap, which I will secretly add to his; he will not perceive it, and so cannot refuse them." And he did as he had thought of doing. On the same night, the other brother awoke, and said to his wife, "My brother is young; he lives alone without any companion; he has no one to assist him in his labour, or console him in his fatigue: it is not just that we should take from our common field as many sheaves as he. Let us get up, and go and carry secretly to his heap a certain number of sheaves; he will not perceive them to-morrow, and so cannot refuse them." And they did as they had thought of doing. The next day, each of the two brothers was much surprised to see that the two heaps were still equal; neither one nor the other could account for this prodigy. They did the same several nights following; but as each carried the same number of sheaves to his brother's heap, it remained always the same: till one night, both of them having kept watch, to find out the cause of this miracle, they met one another, each carrying the sheaves which they mutually intended for each other. Now the place where so good a thought had come at the same time, and so perseveringly to two men, must be a place agreeable to God, and men blessed it, and chose it for building a house of God.

generous elation of the martyrs, who hoped in proportion to their tortures. The pilgrim acts upon the same principle; he adds the fatigue, the privations, the inconveniences of the journey to the prayer which he comes to offer; and he hopes, in virtue of the sufferings which he imposes upon himself, to find favour before God, who suffered so much himself! and why should this hope be vain?

The illustrious Robertson, who was not blinded by the narrow prejudices of his sect, loudly acknowledges the benefits which Europe owes to pilgrimages beyond the seas. First, the emancipation of the common people, the creation of commerce and navigation, the propagation of knowledge, the improvement of agriculture, and the introduction of numerous plants, trees, and cereals, which contribute at the present day to the support of the people of the West; then the freedom of slaves, to which pilgrimages contributed more than anything else; for the feudal lord, who mingled barefoot, and in tight-fitting clothes,[1] with the pilgrims of all conditions who undertook some holy *veage* with him, more easily understood, in those hours of humility and penance, that those despised slaves, whom antiquity put on a level with mere things, were, nevertheless, his brethren in the sight of God; and when he had obtained the favour which he came to seek, far away from his castle, in some ancient sanctuary, he often thought of enfranchising a certain number of his vassals, in honour of Christ, the enemy of slavery, and of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who is all sweetness and mercy.[2]

Pilgrimages, which date from the deluge,[3] which have been

(1) See the Memoires du Sire de Joinville.

(2) A great number of old acts of liberation of slaves still contain this pious form of words, "We transfer and abandon to Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin Mary all our rights over . . . . ," &c.

(3) If we might believe the old traditions of Asia, pilgrimages would be of still higher antiquity. According to the rabbins, the children of Adam returned more than once to contemplate from a distance the enclosure of the terrestrial paradise; and some of the sons of Seth settled on the top of a mountain, from which it could be seen, always hoping that the promised deliverer would soon enable them to enter it again.

received by all nations, and which among Catholics strengthen religious feelings by opening the soul to a crowd of generous and sanctifying emotions,[1] are therefore—whatever Protestants say of them, who have no proper understanding of the human heart—a thing good, laudable, useful, and agreeable to the Divinity. We see those pious practices held in honour from the early times of the Church; Mary, the holy women, and the apostles were the first pilgrims, and the faithful of Europe and Asia walked readily in their footsteps.

"People flock hither," wrote St. Jerom in the fourth century, "from the whole world: Jerusalem is full of men of every nation. Every Gaul of distinction comes to Jerusalem. The Briton, separated from our world, if he has made any progress in religion, leaves his pale sun in search of a land which he knows only by name, and by the testimony of the scriptures. What need is there to speak of the Armenians, the Persians, the people of India, of Ethiopia, of Egypt, fertile in solitaries, of Pontus, of Cappadocia, of both Syrias, of Mesopotamia, and of the swarms of the faithful sent to us by the East? According to the oracle of our Saviour, where the body shall be, there will the eagles be gathered together. They come in crowds to these places, and edify us by the splendour of their virtues. Their language is different, but their religion is the same."[2]

The Mussulmans, who say very justly that it is a pious and eminently salutary practice to go and visit the tombs *of those who have died with pure souls*, have often knelt by the side of Christians in places to which these resorted in pilgrimage. After the taking of Jerusalem, the Caliph Omar would go to Bethlehem; he went into the church, and there made his prayer before the

(1) Doctor Johnson, a zealous Protestant, and one of the most profound thinkers of England, himself acknowledges, that "since men go every day to view the fields where great actions have been performed, and return with stronger impressions of the event, curiosity of the same kind may naturally dispose us to view that country whence our religion had its beginning; and I believe no man surveys those awful scenes without some confirmation of holy resolutions."—(Rasselas, c. xi.)

(2) S. Hier., Ep. 17.

crib where the Lord Messy (*Aïsa Resoul*) was born. He would have the Mussulmans pray there only one at a time, lest there should arise in the crowd any disorder unbecoming the sanctity of the place, and he forbad any to assemble there for any other motive than that of prayer; it is Saadi himself who informs us of this,[1] and the tradition of Jerusalem adds that the same prince went to pray at the tomb of Mary.

Besides the localities connected with our redemption, there were several famous pilgrimages in the Holy Land: Our Lady of Edessa, in Mesopotamia, whither the first Christians came in crowds; Our Lady of Seydnai, where a sultan of Damascus founded a perpetual lamp, out of gratitude for a favour which he had obtained by the intercession of Mary; Our Lady of Belment, two hours' march from Tripoli; finally, Our Lady of Tortosa, the miracles at which, in the middle ages, resounded through all Christendom, and to which the Mussulmans themselves have sometimes brought their children to receive baptism, persuaded as they were that this ceremony, thanks to the protection of the Blessed Virgin, would preserve them from all evil.[2]

We read in the Memoirs of the Sire de Joinville that he went on a pilgrimage to Our Lady de Tourtouze, whence he brought back relics and camlets, which occasioned a very amusing mistake. The seneschal, who had himself taken the relics to the king, sent by one of his officers some packages of fine stuffs from Tripoli to the pious Queen Margaret, to whom he was very happy to present them. The queen, who knew that the Sire de Joinville was returned, and that he brought relics from Tortosa, seeing the chevalier of the seneschal of Champagne enter her apartment with a package in his hand, was going to kneel down before the package, thinking that these were the relics she had heard of. The chevalier who brought the parcel, being ignorant

(1) Omar would go to Bethlehem; he entered the church, and made his prayer in the manger where the *Lord Messias* was born. He would have his Mussulmans pray there only one by one, with prohibition to assemble there in crowds, or be at all noisy.—(Gulistan, On the Manners of Kings, p. 301.)

(2) Tortosa is the modern Tripoli of Syria.

of the queen's motive for what she did, knelt down himself, looking at Margaret without being able to speak. The princess, seeing him in this posture, told him to rise, adding with piety and goodness that it was not for him to kneel, as he had the honour to carry holy relics.—"Relics, Madam?" replied the chevalier, quite astonished, "I do not carry any—it is a parcel of camlets which the Sire de Joinville has sent you." Then the queen and her ladies in attendance began to laugh. "And," said the queen to the chevalier, "bad luck to your lord, for making me kneel before his camlets."[1]

Pilgrimages to the Mother of God have lost nothing of their fervour in Asia, and the Franks are sometimes astonished to meet Turkish women praying devoutly before the tomb of the Blessed Virgin,[2] with the daughters of Sion, the rich women of Armenia, the Greek women from beyond the seas, and the Catholic Arab women. The veneration of the Blessed Virgin among the nations of the East, is not one of those things least striking to travellers; they find that devotion worthy of notice which submits the destinies of men to the power of a woman, in a land where women are so little valued.[3]

Among the Gauls, pilgrimages long preceded the establishment of Christianity; one of the most frequented pilgrimages of western Gaul was a dark cavern, consecrated to the god Belenus, on the rock which was then surrounded by forests, where at the present day rises from the midst of shifting sands the amphibious fortress of Mount St. Michael.[4] It was there that the pilots of Armorica went to purchase of the Druids of Mount Belen enchanted arrows, to which they foolishly attributed the power of

(1) Hist. de Saint Louis, by the Sire de Joinville.

(2) Occident et Orient, by M. Barrault.

(3) The whole of the East, the Jews excepted, are full of respect for the Blessed Virgin, whom Mahomet has placed in the Koran in the number of the four just women. Chardin relates that the Jews of Persia, having ventured to speak ill of her before the followers of Ali, were nearly massacred for their pains, and were obliged to leave the city where the affair occurred.

(4) The vast forest which surrounds Mount St. Michael was under water about the year 709.

changing the winds and dispersing the tempests. When the steep mountain, which was the last bulwark of Druidism, received a Christian abbey, and it had been solemnly consecrated to St. Michael the archangel, the cavern of Belenus was transformed into a delightful marine chapel, dedicated to the *Star of the Sea,* to Mary, the protectress of seafaring men. This chapel was built with pebbles, polished by the waves and rolled up by the ocean; in the inside, the walls and roof were adorned with branches of coral, projecting pieces of amber and bright shells picked up on every shore, and brought by pious mariners; the altar was part of a rock, left with all the roughness of the sand-bank; and all round were seen hung up, as votive offerings, anchors in token of safety, and chains of captives. This chapel was often visited, before the revolution, by long files of seamen saved from shipwreck; these children of the ocean, with a fervour which is not uncommon among them, intoned, with a voice rough as the sound of the waves, the *Ave maris stella* of Fortunatus, Bishop of Poitiers, or that graceful *Salve regina*, which the angels themselves sing on the margins of fountains, according to a charming old tradition related by F. de Barry. The kings of France, down to Louis XV., almost all visited this sanctuary of Mary; and it is contended that an ancient prophecy, preserved in the abbatial archives, threatened with the greatest calamities, even to the third generation, the posterity of that king who should omit to make a pilgrimage to St. Michael and Our Lady. If the prediction really exists, it has been but too truly verified.

The pilgrimages of France present themselves to us surrounded with wonders, which prevent us from tracing their origin; we shall speak of them as our fathers spoke, who were so worthy of our esteem. Those wonders, which tradition has bequeathed to us from age to age, are not with us Catholics articles of faith; and criticism may attack them without wounding the Church; yet, in our opinion, there would be nothing gained by rejecting them: there must be some moss upon old oaks, ivy on ancient abbeys, and something of the marvellous in Gothic legends.

According to the traditions of Lyons, supported by a bull of Innocent IV., St. Pothinus erected the first oratory where Mary was invoked in Gaul. It is asserted that he brought from the interior of Asia a small statue of the Blessed Virgin, which he deposited in a solitary and shaded crypt on the banks of the Saône, in front of the hill of Fourviere. He set up in this wild and secluded spot an altar to the true God, and placed there the image, which was transferred later on to a temple built on the hill itself, whence it took the name of Our Lady of Fourviere. The veneration of the people, in the middle ages, surrounded this church, and it was a pilgrimage of great renown throughout the Lyonnais; but the Calvinists, who destroyed and pillaged so many rich sanctuaries, showed no favour to that of Lyons; the church of Fourviere, where, from the birth of Christianity, each generation had marked its passage by gifts, which would be at this day as precious to the antiquary, the sculptor, and the painter, as to the pilgrim, retained nothing but its four bare walls, which could not be melted down in the crucible, where so many master productions disappeared, which had the misfortune to be made of gold or silver.

The chapter of St. John could not attend to the renovation of that of Fourviere, till long after the ravages of the Protestants. They worked at it after they had restored the cathedral and the cloister. The altar of Mary was at last consecrated on the 21st of August, 1586. From that moment the confidence of the inhabitants turned towards that beacon of salvation. "The source of prodigies seemed dried up there," says an ancient historian; "they began again at the end of the sixteenth century, and all Lyons felt great joy on the occasion."[1]

During the revolution of 1793, the church of Fourviere was sold; but when calm was restored, the zealous prelate who governed the ancient church of Pothinus and Irenæus procured the sanctuary of Mary to be restored to the veneration of her.

(1) Hist. de Notre Dame de Fourvieres, ou Recherches historiques sur l'autel tutelaire des Lyonnais.

The inauguration of it was performed on the 19th of April, 1805, by the sovereign pontiff Pius VII.[1] In 1832 and 1835, Lyons being threatened with cholera, lifted up her eyes to the holy mountain, and the Blessed Virgin said to the scourge, "Thou shalt go no farther." The capital of the Lyonnese, respected against every attempt, changed its cries of alarm into canticles of joy, and the prayers of thanksgiving were solemnly and justly offered to Mary in her protecting sanctuary.

Ever since the happy period when that sanctuary was restored to religious worship, piety seems to have redoubled its ardour for Our Blessed Lady, and it is at Fourviere that it is sharpened and revived. The inhabitants of Lyons, and those of the country adjacent, throng the paths of the hill of Mary; at whatever hour you repair thither, you always find yourself in the midst of a crowd of pious persons of all ranks, ages, and conditions. One day, in the year 1815, a pilgrim of an unusual kind, who had begun by observing Lyons from the summit of the hill, like a man who wanted to study both its strength and its weakness, presented himself in the church of Notre Dame; and the faithful, lifting up for a moment their eyes, which had been cast down in prayer, said to themselves, "Marshal Suchet!" It was indeed he—the marshal of the empire, the child of Lyons, to whom was confided the defence of his native city—who passed along the nave of the church of Mary with a slow step, with a respectful countenance, in which was mingled something mild and softened, something like a distant remembrance of joy, which awakens and soothes the soul with an invisible music. He goes into the sacristy, and directs one of the chaplains to come to him there; the vice-president hastens to him: "Monsieur l'Abbé," says the marshal, stepping forward towards the ecclesiastic, "when I was quite a child, my pious and good mother often brought me here, to the feet of Our Lady, and this I still remember. . . . . I will say more, this recollection is dear to me, and I have never lost it. Be pleased to have some masses said for my intention."

(1) Hist. de Notre Dame de Fourvieres.

And after putting down three Napoleons on the table where the offerings are registered, the brilliant hero of the gigantic epoch went to kneel, quite unpretendingly, before the altar of Mary, where he prayed for some time with edifying devotion. Moreover, Marshal Suchet terminated his noble and loyal career by a Christian end, for which he was praised upon his tomb.

The pilgrimage of Our Lady of Puy, in Velay, is also reckoned one of the oldest of France. It is said that during the occupation of Gaul by the Romans, a lady of Gaul, who had been baptized by St. George, the first bishop of Puy, finding herself dangerously ill, was told that she would recover her health on the summit of mount *Anicium*, not far from where she lived. She had herself carried thither in this hope, and she was hardly seated on the volcanic rock of Puy,[1] when a sweet sleep came over her senses. Then she saw, in a dream, a celestial female, whose dazzling robes floated like a white mist, and whose head was encircled by a crown of precious stones; this woman, of exquisite beauty, was surrounded by a retinue of angelic spirits. "Who," inquired the daughter of the Gauls of one of the blessed spirits, "who is that queen so gracious, so noble, and so beautiful, who comes to me, a poor, sick woman, in my extreme affliction?" "It is the Mother of God," replied the angel; "she has made choice of this rock to be invoked here, and she charges you to inform her servant George of it.—That you may not take the order of Heaven for a vain dream, arise, woman, you are healed." When she awoke, the Gaulish woman had, in fact, no more languor nor fever. Filled with gratitude, she lost no time in running to the bishop, and relating to him with her own mouth the message of the angel.

After listening, in silence, to the commands of her whom he most venerated next to God, St. George bowed down, as if the Blessed Virgin herself had spoken to him, and, without delay, followed by some servants, and accompanied by the converted

(1) In Auvergne and Languedoc a high mountain is called *puy*, from the Italian word *poggio*.

Gaulish woman, he went to visit the miraculous rock. His astonishment was indescribable on seeing it covered with snow, though the heats of July were felt in the plain; and as he still wondered, a stag appeared, and began to run over this summer snow, tracing out with his light feet the ground plan for a vast edifice. The holy bishop, yet more and more astonished, had the place which the stag had passed over enclosed with a strong fence, and in a short time, there arose upon this favoured ground a cathedral, around which was formed the city of Puy, which considers itself impregnable, thanks to the protection of Mary.

The little statue of the Blessed Virgin, which people come to venerate from the interior of Spain, and from all the provinces of the South of France, is as old as the crusades; it is two feet high; it is seated on a throne, after the manner of the Egyptian divinities, and holds the Infant on its knees. What is worthy of attention is, that the statue is enveloped, from the feet to the head, in several bandages of very fine linen, cemented most carefully to the wood, as was the practice of the Egyptians with the mummies. The style of this statue, the material of cedar, and the bandages which cover it, have led to the presumption that it is the work of the solitaries of Libanus, who fashioned it after the model of the Egyptian statues. This image of Our Lady was brought by St. Louis on his return from the Holy Land.

The sovereign pontiffs have encouraged this pilgrimage by their example and beneficence. Several popes have come there as plain pilgrims.

The bishops of Puy received great privileges from the court of Rome, *in consideration of Our Lady*, among others, immediate dependence on the Holy See and the *Pallium*. Several Kings of France have also come to venerate Mary on the mountain of Anicium. In 1422, Charles VII., who was as yet only Dauphin, came to recommend to Our Lady of Puy his almost desperate cause, and it was in the same church that he was proclaimed king of France.

King René likewise performed this pilgrimage with a great

retinue of men and horses; a crowd of Moors, probably converted to the Christian faith, followed him in their oriental costume.

The Chapel of Our Lady of the Mounts, or of Ceignac, seated on a hill surrounded by other hills, in the ancient forest of Cayrac, between Viaur and the Aveyron, is celebrated for the pilgrimage of a Hungarian palatine prince, who, in 1150, miraculously recovered his sight, thanks to the intercession of Our Lady. This nobleman, afflicted in the flower of his age with the most distressing blindness, left the banks of the Danube with a hundred military men, to come and petition Our Lady of the Mounts for a termination to his long sufferings.

He embarked upon the Adriatic Sea, and after having sailed along the coasts of Italy, he entered the Gulf of Lyons; but there a horrible tempest dispersed the vessels of his little fleet, and it was with great difficulty that his esquire saved him in a boat, which succeeded in reaching the shore. Afflicted at this disastrous event, and deploring the fate of his companions in arms, the blind prince, accompanied by his faithful servant, made his way to the mountains of Languedoc, directing his course, by short journeys, towards the Chapel of Our Lady of the Mounts, where he arrived in 1150. A sportsman, who was spreading his nets on the verdant banks of the Viaur, pointed out the ford of the river to the two pilgrims, and led them to an eminence whence the little church could be seen. The prince palatine, who had been for some years deprived of the light of heaven, could not see the religious edifice in the distance, but he heard the lively chime of its morning bells, and prostrating on the grass still wet with the dew, he blessed God and Our Lady for his having at length arrived at the end of so long a journey. He entered full of faith into the sanctuary which he had come so far to seek, and had a solemn mass celebrated at the altar of Mary. When the mass was over, and the blind prince was praying with tears before the image of the Blessed Virgin, a noise of arms, raised by pilgrims crowding into the church, attracted his attention. He instinctively raised his eyes, though he could not see. O what a surprise! he *does see* his own

banner; and these pilgrims prostrating themselves, whose oriental pelisses form such a contrast with the brown capes of the peasants of Languedoc—they are his faithful Hungarians! A cry of happiness and gratitude escapes him; he has recovered his sight, and his soldiers are there! Our Lady had treated *her vassal* with the generosity of a *Lady paramount*, and had not done things by halves. Seven lamps of massive silver were the donation which the Hungarian lord offered to the Blessed Virgin; by his orders a cross was erected on the hill where he had prayed, and this account was engraved upon it in Gothic characters. A group in relief, placed in the sanctuary of Mary, represented the prince palatine and his esquire on their knees before the image of the Blessed Virgin; above was a Latin inscription in these terms:—

> "Ecce palatinus privatus lumine princeps,
> Munera magna ferens, sed meliora refert,
> Virginis auspiciis, divino in lumine, lumen
> Cernit, et exultat, dum pia perficerent.
> Insuper et centum famulos in littore fractos
> Invenit incolumes; dicitur inde locus."

Among the benefactors of the Chapel of Our Lady of Ceignac are reckoned the Dukes of Arpajon, Cardinal de la Pelagrua, nephew of Pope Clement V., and a vast number of bishops and great personages.

The pilgrimage of Our Lady of Roc-Amadour, a short distance from Cahors, is situated in the most sterile and mountainous part of Quercy. A saint, whom an unsupported local tradition would make the Zaccheus of the Gospel, about the third century, penetrated into a labyrinth of rocks which raise their lofty crests above the narrow and deep ravine where the Lauzou rolls its waters; this ravine, which is at this day named the valley of the Roc-Amadour, was then called the Dark Valley, and abounded in wild beasts.

This scenery, melancholy, but not without grandeur, which reminded one of Thebais, had doubtless some analogy with the deep and austere thoughts of the anchorite; he made himself a cell on one of the prominent peaks of the mountain, and hollowed

out of the rock, on a level with the eagles' nests, an oratory to the Mother of God. The Gallico-Roman population of the fine valleys of Figeac and Saint-Céré, who sometimes perceived him from a distance on the sharp point of these bare and wild mountains, the height of which turns one giddy, surnamed him *Amator rupis;* this name, the only one which has come down to us, was changed into that of *Amador*, then Amadour, as more congenial to the dialect of the South.

The little statue of the Blessed Virgin, resembling those which the new Christians of Gaul venerated in the hollows of oak trees, was the instrument of miracles in favour of the fervent pilgrims who came to invoke Her in her rocky sanctuary. The pilgrims multiplied, and soon became so frequent, that a town was built at the foot of the holy place; this town, situated in a desolate region, on a spot unproductive, and one of the most difficult of access at first, became nevertheless, thanks to the devotion of our fathers, one of the principal towns of Quercy; it had towers, consuls, and a coat-of-arms in which three rocks *argent* figured with lilies *or*, upon a field *gules*.

Above the steeple of the old church of Roc-Amadour, at a prodigious height, arose a citadel destined to protect the rich sanctuary of Mary; those bastions, the outlines of which were proudly traced against the clouds, and which now cover the soil of their ruins, could not repulse the gloomy followers of Calvin, who would have gone through hell itself for the sake of gold. The chapel of Our Lady has now-a-days a better bulwark—its poverty.

This pilgrimage was celebrated even in the time of Charlemagne; the famous knight-errant Roland, nephew of this emperor, came to Roc-Amadour in 778; he offered to the Blessed Virgin a gift of silver of the weight of his *bracmar* (sword), and after his death in the fields of Roncevaux, this *bracmar* was brought to Roc-Amadour.[1] In the year 1170, according to Roger

(1) Dupleix, Hist. de France, Charlemagne, c. 8. This *bracmar* having been lost, or stolen, a warlike mace was substituted for it, which retained the name of Roland's sword.

de Hoveden, Henry II., King of England and Duke of Guienne, through his wife Eleanor, came to Roc-Amadour to fulfil a vow, which he had made to the Blessed Virgin in a long illness, with which he was attacked at La Motte-Gercei. As the lands bordering upon Quercy *had no great liking for the Englishman*, the island monarch protected himself with a small army to make this pious *veage*. Henry left marks of his munificence at the chapel of Our Lady, and with the poor of Roc-Amadour.

In the number of illustrious pilgrims, who came to honour Mary in her mountain sanctuary, is reckoned Simon de Montfort, legate of the pope; Arnauld Amaric, who was afterwards Bishop of Narbonne; St. Louis, accompanied by his three brothers, by Blanche of Castile, and Alphonsus, Count of Boulogne, who ascended the throne of Portugal; King Charles the Fair, King John, Louis XI., and a multitude of powerful lords.

Among the great bishops who visited, at different times, the miraculous chapel of Our Lady, we find one name so dear to literature, to humanity, and to Catholicism, that we cannot leave him among the crowd; this name, by which France considers herself honoured, and which commands the respect even of impiety itself, is that of the swan of Cambray. Devoted from his cradle to Our Lady of Roc-Amadour, by his pious mother, Fenelon came more than once to pray, in the depths of Quercy, to her who had laid on his lips a comb of Attic honey, and given him the courageous wisdom which he employed so nobly in the instruction of kings. Two pictures, hung up as votive offerings, in the sanctuary of Mary, represent two solemn phases of his existence. In the first, he is newly-born, and sleeps in his cradle; in the second, being a young man, and already a doctor, he comes to pay homage to his divine Protectress, for the first success of his rising genius. At some distance is a tomb, over which he wept and prayed later on—that of his mother, whose wish was to sleep her last sleep in the shadow of the altar of Mary.

Sometimes it was not merely isolated pilgrims, but cities and provinces in a body, who repaired to Roc-Amadour. "In 1546,"

says M. de Malleville, in his Chronicles of Quercy, "on the 24th June, the day and feast of the blessed Sacrament and of St. John, was the great *pardon* of Roc-Amadour; to which the concourse of people of the kingdom, and of foreigners, was so great, that several persons, of all ages and of each sex, were smothered in the crowd, and a very great number of tents were set up in the country, on all sides, like a great encampment."

The gifts received by the sanctuary of Roc-Amadour were of great magnificence: among them appears the forest of Mont-Salvy, given in 1119, by Odo, Count of La Marche, "to the Blessed Mary of Roc-Amadour;" the lands of Fornellas and Orbanella, "for the good of the souls of his relatives," by Alphonsus IX., King of Castile and Toledo, in 1181.

In the year 1202, Sancho VII., King of Navarre, gave a revenue of forty-eight pieces of gold for lighting the chapel of Notre Dame; and in 1208, Savaric, Prince of Mauleon, a great captain and famous troubadour, gave as a pure and perpetual alms, to the Blessed Mary of Roc Amadour, his land of Lisleau, with absolute exemption from all tax and charge. Pope Clement V., in 1314, left a legacy to the same church, "to keep up perpetually a lighted wax candle honourably in a vase or dish of silver, in the chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Roc-Amadour, to honour this Blessed Virgin, and obtain the deliverance of his soul."

It would be too long to cite the other benefactors of the chapel of Mary; the whole extent of this blessed rock shone with votive offerings of gold, pearls, and precious stones; Spanish princesses had worked its rich hangings with their own hands, and fourteen lamps of massive silver, the twisted chains of which formed a magnificent network, lighted it up night and day. By a contrast not found anywhere but in Christendom, the altar of the Madonna was of wood, as it was in the time of St. Amadour, and the miraculous image was a little statue of dark oak, very rudely carved. A remarkable object in the roof of the chapel, in a belfry, surrounded by brilliant windows of painted glass, was a small bell without any rope, which sounded by itself, whenever it

pleased the *Star of the Sea* to manifest her power in favour of vessels in distress which called upon her amidst the solitudes of the ocean.

The Virgin of Quercy was a prey too precious to escape from Protestantism. On the 3rd of September, 1592, Duras took possession of Roc-Amadour; the crosses were broken, the images disfigured, the rich vestments burnt and torn up into shreds, the bells melted down, and the body of St. Amadour, smashed with strokes of the hammer, was profanely cast into the flames.[1] The atheists of 1793 put the seal to these devastations.

At the present time, the towers of the city are buried beneath the turf; shrubs are growing on the ruins of the citadel; tufts of grass spring up between the disjointed stones of the magnificent flight of two hundred and seventy-eight steps, which leads from the city to the airy sanctuary of Mary; the guitar of the *cantadours* of Languedoc no longer celebrates the miracles of Our Lady; and the night wind alone whistles in that antique chapel, where the organ has been removed for the sake of economy. The Blessed Virgin of Roc-Amadour might now call herself the *Virgin of Ruins*, and yet she still works miracles.

The pilgrimage to Our Lady of Liesse, in Picardy, not so old as those of the south of France, as it does not go farther back than the twelfth century, surpasses them in celebrity. The origin of the statue of the Blessed Virgin, which adorns this holy place, is very marvellous; the tradition has been preserved, not only in the province of France where it is found, but also in the Holy Land;[2] we are assured even that it exists in the archives of the Knights of Malta.[3] Here is the tradition, which bears a very decided oriental stamp.

Foulques of Anjou, King of Jerusalem, having rebuilt the fortress of Bersabée, four leagues from Ascalon, to protect the frontier of his kingdom against the incursions of the Saracens,

(1) Odo de Gissey, Hist. de Roc-Amadour.
(2) See Hist. de Notre Dame de Liesse, by the Abbé Villette, Addit. au disc. prelim., p. 100.
(3) Hist. de Notre Dame de Liesse, pp. 10, 11, et 12.

confided the care of it to the brave and pious knights of St. John of Jerusalem. This valiant garrison was often engaged against the infidels who held the ancient country of the Philisthines for the Sultan of Egypt. One day the knights of St. John, among whom were three brothers of the ancient and opulent house of Eppes, in Picardy, fell into an ambuscade, and in spite of prodigies of valour, were taken and laden with chains by the Mussulmans, who sent them into Egypt. The gentlemen of Eppes had the lofty mien, the tall stature, and the heroic bearing of the ancient nobles of the north of France. The sultan at once singled them out, and, desirous of gaining them over to his false prophet, he begun by throwing them into a dungeon to bring down their courage, and held before their eyes afterwards the most enticing prospects, in order to draw them into apostacy. The three warriors, who had been inaccessible to fear, were deaf to the noise of gold and the voice of ambition. The sultan, deceived in his expectations, sent to them the most celebrated *imaums*, to argue with them upon faith. The good knights, through hatred of Islamism, became all at once subtile theologians, and defended Christianity as well in dispute as they had often done with the shield on their arm and the lance in their grasp. The sultan considered himself bound in honour to vanquish the captives, and his opposition increasing with their resistance, he swore that the Knights of St. John should follow the standard of the prophet, even if it should cost him the half of Egypt. He had a daughter handsome, chaste, accomplished, and every way worthy to follow a better faith; he sent her to the dungeon where the French knights were languishing in fetters, and charged her to set before them a frightful picture of the punishments prepared for them. The knights received the princess with those testimonies of respect which were at that time lavished upon ladies; but they repelled her insinuations with the resolute courage of men who accept of martyrdom, and explained to her their belief in a manner so persuasive that the Mussulman lady betook herself to serious reflection on CHRIST and his Blessed Mother. A miraculous and resplendent image

of Mary, which, it is said, was brought by angels to the pious champions of the Christian faith, completed the conversion of the young infidel. One night, when she had gained over the guards of the three French warriors by bribes of gold, she made her way into their prison with a casket full of precious stones, and made her escape with them from her father's palace.

After passing the Nile in a boat prepared for their reception, the fugitives directed their course towards Alexandria, hoping, perhaps, to conceal themselves for a time in the Coptic monasteries of the desert of St. Macarius; but after marching for some hours, the princess, exhausted with fatigue, wished to rest for a little while, and, in spite of the imminent danger, the three knights of St. John, determined to keep good guard, made her sit down in a field of *doura* in full verdure, and seated themselves at a respectful distance. The princess fell asleep, and her travelling companions, after struggling in vain against the drowsiness which followed long nights without rest, slept soundly also.

No one knows how long their slumber continued. The knight of Eppes, the eldest of the three, was the first who awoke; the sun was beginning to gild the tops of the trees, where he heard the sweet singing of birds. The crusader looked at the landscape with great surprise: he had gone to sleep in sight of the Nile and the pyramids, under the fan-like branches of a palm-tree, and he awoke beneath an oak, with knotty branches, on the margin of a clear spring, on the freshest turf, sprinkled with white daisies. A short distance off, the round and dark towers of an old baronial castle reminded him of the manor where he had left his mother, all in tears at his departure for the Holy Land. A shepherd, who was driving his sheep to the fields, relieved him of his perplexity; the castle which he beheld, was his own castle of Marchais, and he awoke in Picardy, beneath the avenue which his fathers had planted. He blessed the Holy Virgin, and awakened his companions, whose astonishment was as great as his own.

They had preserved the image of the oriental Madonna;

they built a handsome church to receive it, and the Mussulman princess received baptism in the cathedral of Laon.

We may innocently believe that this little statue of Mary came into France by more natural means; but what it is impossible to doubt is, that it was brought from the Holy Land by three great men of Eppes, knights of St. John of Jerusalem.

The most illustrious names of the monarchy figure in the list of pilgrims to Our Lady of Liesse. We read there those of the Duke of Burgundy, Louis II. of Bourbon, Prince of Condé, Duke of Mercœur, of Prince Albert Henry of Ligne, of Madam Henrietta Frances of France, Queen of England, of the princes of Longueville, of Marshal D'Ancre, of Mademoiselle de Guise, of the Count D'Egmont, of Louis, Duke of Orleans, brother of Charles VI., of Charles VII., of King René, of Louis XI., of Francis I., of Henry II., of Charles IX., of Queen Mary of Medicis, of Louis XIII., of Ann of Austria, of Louis XIV., &c.

Several of these great personages, not satisfied with leaving rich presents to Our Lady of Liesse, placed their statues there: that of Louis II. of Bourbon, Prince of Condé, was of gold.

Mary D'Arquin, then grand Marshal of Poland, and who was afterwards queen of that kingdom, came to the chapel of Our Lady in 1671; she offered to the Blessed Virgin a child in silver, representing the Prince Alexander Sobieski, her son, with a golden chain enriched with diamonds, to testify that she devoted him to the Mother of God, as her slave.[1]

This sanctuary was pillaged like the others by the Huguenots; the Revolution came to glean what was left.

The chapel of Our Lady of Liesse still attracts, at the present day, a great concourse of pilgrims.

In the legend of St. Liphard de Meung, who lived in 550, mention is made of the town of Clery, and of an oratory dedicated there to the Blessed Virgin. In 1280, some labourers placed there a little statue of Our Lady, which they had one day met with under their ploughshare. This discovery made a sensation,

(1) Hist. de Notre Dame de Liesse, pp. 10, 11, et 12.

and attracted the attention of the most illustrious noblemen of the time. Among these nobles, Simon de Melun, a great baron, who had accompanied St. Louis in Africa, and whom Philip the Fair elevated to the dignity of marshal of France, formed the design of founding a collegiate church there; but death, which he gloriously met with at the siege of Courtray, prevented him from executing this pious project, which his widow and son made it their duty to accomplish. After his victories in Flanders, Philip the Fair, who had prospered under the protection of Mary, was struck with the concourse of the faithful who repaired to Our Lady of Clery; he increased the number of the canons, and resolved to rebuild the church; but death, who defeats so many projects, religious as well as others, left him, in this respect, no other merit than his good intention. The church, nevertheless, was begun in his reign, and continued, thanks to the munificence of his third son, Charles, Duke of Orleans. Philip of Valois, that noble prince, who said to his soldiers, in conquered countries, "Respect the churches!" caused that of Our Lady to be finished, which the English Salisbury pillaged during the celebrated siege of Orleans. Louis XI., who would have new sleeves put to his old doublets, to wear them till they were threadbare, but who knew how to act his part as king, when he pleased, built the church of Clery, gave to it 2,330 golden crowns, settled upon it great revenues, erected it into a royal chapel, and richly endowed its canons.

This monument, the object of so many expenses, and so much care, was destroyed by a fire in 1472, as they had just finished covering it in. "The whole was set on fire and burnt," says the chronicle of Louis XI.; but the church was rebuilt anew under the inspection of the king's secretary.

Louis XI., having recovered his health at Clery, and attributing his recovery to the Blessed Virgin, enriched its collegiate church with fresh donations, and had his tomb prepared in it. "He placed himself in it several times," says one of his historians, "to see whether the place fitted his body, and was well proportioned to receive it after his death." He was interred

there, according to his desire. His wife, Charlotte of Savoy, was laid there near him, some time after.

The Calvinists, who no more respected the tombs of kings than the altars of saints, broke in pieces the statue of Louis XI., and violated his royal tomb for the sake of plunder. This tomb, reconstructed by Louis XIII., was mutilated again during the Revolution, and restored by Louis XVIII. Devotion to the Blessed Virgin still reigns there, with the greatest fervour, in the ancient church of Louis XI.

The pilgrimage to Our Lady of the Thorn, near Châlons-sur-Marne, began in the first years of the fifteenth century. On the eve of the feast of the Annunciation, in the year 1419, two young shepherds who were tending their sheep by the side of a small chapel dedicated to St. John Baptist, perceived, in the middle of a bramble bush near them a bright light. The foremost sheep, frightened at this light, ran away, but the young lambs came near the bush; the shepherds followed their example, and discovered a little statue of the Blessed Virgin, holding in her arms her divine Infant. The miraculous light having increased when the night came on, the people ran from all points whence it could be seen; and as the spot where this prodigy took place was very elevated, it could be verified from a distance of ten leagues round about. The Bishop of Châlons, at the head of his chapter, and several parish priests of the neighbouring villages, came in procession to the place. They found the bush as green as in spring; they took out the little statue of the Madonna, and transferred it to the small chapel of St. John Baptist, which was close by.

This prodigy attracted all the faithful of Champagne to the chapel, which soon became a celebrated pilgrimage. With the offerings of the pilgrims, a superb church was built from the designs of an Irish architect; this work was continued with perseverance; in spite of the wars with the English, the inhabitants, though impoverished and plundered, did not hesitate to leave their ploughs to go and fetch stones from the interior of Lorraine. The works went on with fresh activity when Charles VII.

had sent a considerable sum to continue this fine edifice. It took a century to build it, and during that century, in spite of wars, of the black plague, of famine, of all the scourges, in fine—of which the English were certainly the worst—the same fervour had been kept up. The cities of Châlons and Verdun would contribute to the decoration of this edifice, which was to perpetuate the memory of the miraculous bush. The one gave to it superb painted glass, which told the history of the miracle; the other, magnificent bells; the liberal donations of the faithful, great and small, rich and poor, did the rest.

During the wars of religion, the English Protestants, masters of part of Champagne, having heard of the riches contained in the sanctuary of Our Lady of the Thorn, formed the project to plunder and destroy it; but the proprietor of the place, a nobleman full of courage and faith, had the beautiful church fenced in with palisades, and having put himself at the head of a handful of young men collected together by patriotism and devotion to Mary, they succeeded in repelling the enemy and saving the altar of the Madonna. Forced to beat a retreat, the English behaved like Vandals; they fired a final discharge at the windows, and broke a great part of them. Nevertheless, by a kind of prodigy, the famous pane of glass on which is represented the finding of the miraculous statue remained untouched. In memory of that fortunate day, the fabric of the Church of Our Lady of the Thorn made presents, down to the Revolution, to the descendants of the nobleman who had saved it from profanation and pillage, of two blessed swords, which they received on the day of the Assumption, at the foot of the altar of the Blessed Virgin.

A solemn procession takes place in this church every year; a crowd of young children, of delicate complexion, who have been devoted to wear white in honour of the Blessed Virgin, assist at it on the 15th of August, each holding a taper: these are the supplicants of Mary. Science had issued a sentence of death against them from their entrance into the world; their mothers devoutly appealed to the Blessed Virgin, and they hope, thanks to her aid and support, to be able to save these frail plants, who

grow beneath the shade of her holy protection, and who need it to acclimatise themselves upon earth. Nothing is more affecting than to see these little angels, clothed in white, and pale as the flowers which form the wreaths round their heads, kneeling at the feet of Mary, and beseeching her, by repeating the prayer which is dictated to them, without as yet understanding its meaning, to preserve their poor little lives, which are at the same time those of their mothers . . . . When the rosy tints of health have reappeared on their infantine faces, when at length the seventh year has passed over their young heads, and they are about to leave off the white livery of the Blessed Virgin, with what joy do their happy mothers bring them to the mass of thanksgiving! What prayers, warm from the heart, arise then to Our Lady of the Thorn at that altar!

There exists in the Vosges a pilgrimage, in which a superstition kept up among the poor women of the common people, which partakes at the same time of Christian and maternal feeling. About the year 1070, a religious of Senones built on the bank of a solitary torrent a hermitage and a chapel, where people came to pray to Our Lady of the Meix; the pilgrimage was subsequently discontinued, or suppressed. At the present day, the chapel has fallen to ruin, and a stone cross broken in half rises alone amid the ruins; but underneath these ruins there are subterraneous vaults, and a stone altar yet tells where they still come to lay those little children whom death has smitten on the threshold of life, and who have been unable to receive the sacred sign which would have made them like unto the angels. "No sooner are they laid upon this stone," says the mountaineer who serves as a guide to the traveller in this dark crypt, "than their eyes open again, a slight breathing escapes from their little lips closed by death, the water of baptism flows upon their foreheads; then they fall asleep again, to ascend to heaven." By digging a little into the ground, the remains of these poor little flowers of humanity, which withered at the icy breath of death in the first hour of their morning, are found round about the altar dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, who raises up the

little children to life, that they may go to Jesus Christ; that ignorant, but exalted tenderness of feeling which came to beg the miracle of Mary, interred them beneath her wing, that she might not forget them!

Let incredulity be indignant at this superstition of the heart; tender and pious souls will find in it only a motive for gentle commiseration. No doubt, more than one mother has been deceived in thinking that she saw the cold lips of her child become reanimated with her kisses, to receive the sacred water; but whoever should dare to advance that Mary cannot perform miracles as great when she pleases, would be, to say the truth, a bold mortal.

The Pyrenees, those fine mountains crowned with larches, whose bowels formerly enclosed mines of gold, and where cascades, glittering in the sun, fall from a height so prodigious, and are so much detached from their native rocks, that they resemble a long piece of silvery gauze unrolled in the air; the Pyrenees, some spots of which, fresh and graceful as the Eden of the primitive world, are saddened by the fall of gigantic rocks, which give one the idea of chaos, are not without sanctuaries dedicated to Mary: the oldest and most famous is that of Our Lady of Heas, the resort of the inhabitants of all the valleys of Bearn and Bigorre. Among the precipices of Heas, an altar has been erected, where the goatherd would never have dared to hang up a temporary screen from the storm; the Romans would have dedicated this altar to the genius of storms—the Christians have erected it to her who appeases the winds and the waves. On the 8th of September, the Nativity of Mary, and on the 15th of August, the day of her glorious death, a prodigious crowd assemble at Our Lady of Heas from the neighbouring valleys. Each pilgrim, as he returns, breaks off a piece of the blessed rock, which he carries home with great respect, as a relic, to his cottage.

The mountain pilgrimages are picturesque; but how affecting are those of the sea coasts! How much good does a sanctuary of Mary do, which seems to show us heaven with the point of its

spire, on the height of a promontory whence it is descried afar off on the deep! The mariner, who bids adieu to it with sadness, as he departs from the land where he leaves his wife and his little children, hails it with rapture on his return; that steeple looks to him beautiful as hope, and mingles with that anxiety which oppresses his heart in spite of himself, when he is on the point of beholding his family again, whom he has quitted for months, and perhaps years, a certain religious confidence, which makes him believe that all goes well, thanks to the protection of the "good Virgin." . . . . And then, it was perhaps Our Lady who preserved from shipwreck both himself and his ship's crew; and the first care of these poor people, on landing, will be to go, barefooted, as they did in the fulness of the middle ages, to hang up on the walls of the maritime chapel the offering which they vowed, when the hurricane was shivering the masts and rending the sails. *La Vigie* of Dieppe related, last year, in its number for October 3, one of those moving scenes which make particular impression upon the people, notwithstanding the wickedness of the times. "A ceremony of a nature truly affecting took place yesterday at the church of St. James," says that journal. "The crew of the lugger *L'Automne*, which experienced so violent a tempest on the 3rd of September, gave up all for lost, when the master, Louis Couteur, had the thought to make, in the name of his companions, a vow to Our Lady of Good Help, the patroness of mariners. He had scarcely pronounced the vow, when a sunbeam, suddenly breaking through the profound darkness, in which they were enveloped, came to restore their hopes and revive their sunken courage. It was this vow which the gratitude of those brave men fulfilled yesterday in the chapel of Our Lady of Good Help. Yesterday then, all the sailors of the crew, escaped from the tempest, repaired, with bare heads and feet, in their naval dress, carrying on their robust shoulders the votive offering placed on a litter, and surrounded with blue streamers, to the chapel of Our Lady, accompanied by their relatives and friends, and a considerable crowd of people. An address, full of feeling, was made to them by the curé, who

after the mass of thanksgiving, recited the *De Profundis* for the captain and four sailors who perished in the waves."

Our Lady of Grace is one of the most ancient maritime chapels of Normandy; this sanctuary was built, as we have already mentioned, in consequence of a vow made, in a great tempest, by a Norman duke, who was very devout to the Blessed Virgin. The site of this handsome chapel, surrounded by large trees, in the midst of turf enamelled with flowers, is beautiful and calm, like the rich and fresh landscapes of the magnificent province of which it forms part. Our Lady of Grace appears like the fortress of Honfleur; from the little mountain which it crowns, the mouth of the Seine is visible, and farther on the ocean, with its long waves of dark green, which receives in its bosom the river of blue waters. Two roads lead to the chapel: the one rough and rocky, the other smooth and even; in other times the inhabitants of Honfleur took delight in pointing it out, in reducing its steepness, in covering it with small, fine sand, so that a gracious princess, who had made herself beloved in these parts by her generous bounty, might be able to ascend it without fatigue, when she went to offer her prayers and vows to the Blessed Virgin. The hurricane of revolutions has carried off the noble lady to a distance, as the wind bears away a rose leaf; but the remembrance of her beneficence still subsists.

One day, not long ago, groups of spectators covered the little grassy esplanade, which is crowned by Our Lady of Grace; they supported themselves upon the sides of the rock, hung on to the bushes, and climbed up the trees, and all eyes were turned towards the waters, looking out for some object which was expected. The enthusiasm was great, but religious and somewhat mournful; prayers ascended to heaven, and tears fell from many eyes; a vessel passed under the heights of Our Lady, a ship with a black flag, and a coffin on her deck. . . . . The clergy let their prayers descend upon her; the people wept! . . . . On that day there was no chapel of the Blessed Virgin, on either bank of the Seine, where multitudes of the faithful did not pray for the soul of the great emperor, and Our Lady of Grace was

very fervently invoked for that illustrious cast-away of fortune, who died on a rock, where,—misery supreme!—there floated the flag of England.

Half a league from Pornie, a small seaport ten leagues from Nantes, rises picturesquely on a height which overlooks the ocean, the maritime village and church of St. Mary; this church, the steeple of which announces remote antiquity, and which possesses in its narrow cemetery the burial place of a crusader, is held in great veneration among the Breton sailors, who often repair thither to fulfil their vows. Whenever a Breton vessel passes under sail eastward in sight of the church of St. Mary, the sailors uncover their heads and say the *Hail Mary.* Not a peasant along the coast goes into the sea to bathe, without dipping his hand into the water, and making with it devoutly the sign of the cross, turning his head towards the protecting sanctuary; the fishermen when tossed about by tempests, which are more dangerous on the coasts than on the open sea, cherish hope as long as they can see from a distance the picturesque steeple of the church of St. Mary,—" the Virgin beholds them." This thought prevents their losing courage, and is already to them a chance of preservation.

When the high and proud waves of the Atlantic, driven by a furious wind, come roaring on to the mouths of the sandy creeks of La Guienne, and when they recede from the shore, rolling along pebbles with a hoarse and frightful roaring, if there appears in the horizon of the sea a vessel dismasted, and struggling with all its might against the tempest, it is Our Lady of Arcachon, whom the wives, mothers, and children of the sailors of old Aquitaine invoke for the vessel; which may, if it is wrecked on the coast, cast upon the shore of his native land the corpse of some person dear to them. This chapel of Mary, where clouds of white sea-gulls come and perch, announcing a coming tempest by their shrill cries, stands in a wild and solitary spot, enlivened here and there by some groves of pines, with pyramidal tops. Many sailors and poor women, in alarm, come thither barefoot, dropping the black beads of their rosaries with

their rough hands; and numerous votive offerings, hung upon the ancient walls, announce that more than one prayer has been heard by the Holy Virgin.

Our Lady of La Garde, whose chapel of the thirteenth century, upon the summit of a high mountain, is built of limestone of a bluish grey, from which can be seen the Mediterranean, with its islands, its Castle of If, and its waves, whether bright or dark, receives the last thoughts and the last look of the Provençal mariner as he leaves his country. Thither he directs his steps when his ship returns to port, after a voyage in the distant countries of the Levant; it is no rare thing to see the sailors climb up, on their knees, the mountain which is crowned by that old chapel, to return thanks to her, whom they call, with quite Italian familiarity, "the good Mother of Protection," for having preserved them from the perils of the sea, the wind, and the plague. But not to mariners only is the Madonna of Marseilles good and ready to help; she is the guardian of the city, which addresses itself to her, with pious confidence, in all calamities. When the cholera, which desolated and depopulated France, appeared on the soil of Provence, the ancient and beautiful Phocian city knelt, as one man, before its beloved protectress, who did not fail to succour it. Moreover, to testify its gratitude to her, Marseilles has just consecrated to her a magnificent statue of massive silver, of admirable workmanship. This is well done!

In Corsica, Our Lady of Lavisina, seated within sight of the blue waves of the Mediterranean, wafts to her pilgrims, as well as to the ships whose sails swell in the horizon, the perfume of her orange-trees, as a graceful manifestation of her presence. This sanctuary, dedicated to the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, was for a long time obscure, and the coral fishers, who frequent that fine portion of the coast of the island, alone came there to pray; when, about the middle of the seventeenth century, the Madonna of Corsica worked miracles, the report of which reached even to Italy. The church was then enlarged and ornamented; a great concourse of the faithful of the island repaired to it, barefooted

and with tapers in their hands, on the feast of the patroness; which is still done with the same devotion as formerly. The picture, which adorns this chapel, the work of an Italian painter, represents Mary as a child, on whose head St. Ann gracefully lets fall a transparent veil.

The origin of the celebrated pilgrimage of Our Lady of the Hermits, the Loretto of Helvetia, goes back to the heroic times of Charlemagne. The saint who first inhabited the hermitage of Einsiedeln, was a young lord of Suabia, named Meinrad, belonging to the illustrious family of the counts of Hohenzollern. Gifted with that genius of reverie which still forms the prominent feature of the German character, Meinrad, when scarcely arrived at adolescence, loved to bury himself in the thickest parts of the woods, which then covered his country, and to entertain himself alone with his God, by the sound of bubbling springs, flowing beneath the shade of oaks. Oftentimes night overtook him attentively reading the Scriptures in an old book with golden clasps, which he had inherited from his fathers, or meditating profoundly on the miracles and benefits of the Blessed Virgin. His soul was elevated in solitude; taking pity on the world and its worthless goods, Meinrad made his vows in the Abbey of Richenau, which he quitted afterwards to settle in a small hermitage built on the top of Mount Etzel. He spent seven years there; but the good odour of his virtues descended to the depths of the valleys; the shepherds and woodmen came to him, then the great lords, then the noble ladies, humbly to solicit his prayers and counsels. These acts of homage were a torment to the young hermit, who loved nothing but contemplative prayer and the peace of the woods; one night he secretly left his hermitage, carrying with him, as his sole possession, the statue of the Blessed Virgin, the only ornament of his chapel, and took refuge in a forest of the canton of Schwytz, which bore the characteristic name of the *dark forest.*

Thirty-two years afterwards, he was assassinated by some wicked men, with whom he had shared the water from his fountain and the wild fruits of the forest; the birds of heaven

pursued the murdcrerers, who underwent the chastisement which their crime deserved.[1]

After the tragical death of Meinrad, his cell, where miracles were wrought, was uninhabited for almost half a century. At the end of that time, a small society of hermits came and settled there under the care of St. Benno, of the ducal house of Burgundy. Hence the surname of *Our Lady of the Hermits*, which was given to the chapel of Einsiedeln. St. Eberhard devoted his possessions, which were considerable, to building a monastery in this place, of which he was the first abbot.

The chapel of the Blessed Virgin, as it was in the time of St. Benno, was placed in the great church of the convent, of which St. Meinrad's cell formed the choir; the French destroyed this chapel, which had resisted the furious attempts of Protestantism; but God permitted that the miraculous statue of the Blessed Virgin should be saved in time. It was replaced in the church of Einsiedeln in 1803, with great solemnity, and in 1817 it recovered part of its ancient magnificence, thanks to the influx of the most distinguished artists, and the abundant alms of the faithful.

The monastery of Einsiedeln does not rise beneath a mild sky; its steeple, covered with snow for a great part of the year, has its outline traced upon dull clouds, in which are hidden long frosts; at its base extends a barren country, where poor harvests ripen with difficulty; the fruits are rare and insipid, and the fields are enlivened only by the lilac flower of the potato; but Our Lady delights to manifest her power there, and the rocky road of the sanctified mountain is often watered with the noblest blood of Germany; for more than one count of the empire, more than one noble German lady, make it a duty to ascend the Einsiedeln barefoot. There still remains some little of the

(1) The murderers were betrayed by two ravens, who harassed them incessantly as far as Zurich; they even made their way through the windows of the inn which the assassins had entered, and did not leave them till they had witnessed their punishment. It is in memory of this event that the Abbey of Reichenau bears two ravens in its coat of arms.

ancient fervour of the brave men of Frederick in old Germany. As to the Catholic population of Helvetia, nothing can equal their confidence in Our Lady of the Hermits, and there are few families, even in the most distant cantons, where this ancient pilgrimage is dispensed with.

"The first thing that strikes the sight, in the fine church of Einsiedeln," says a French traveller, who visited it in 1839, "is the miraculous chapel, where the unpretending image of the Blessed Virgin is exposed. Mass was said there, and a great crowd of the faithful—men, women, and children, of all ranks and of all ages—assisted at the holy sacrifice, fervently waiting for the time of Communion; others thronged round the confessionals; others, after communicating, heard a mass of thanksgiving in the side chapels. Almost every canton of Switzerland had its representatives there. There you saw the broad backs of Fribourg, the short petticoat of Guggisberg, the corset, ornamented with silver, and the caduceus, decorated with black lace, of the women of Berne, the white crests of Schwytz, the velvet collar of Shaffhausen, and the little helmet of the Valais. In a group, from which the other pilgrims kept aloof with a kind of respect, we recognised the ribands, shawls, and elegant appearance of the women from France. The men, less numerous, and more uniformly dressed, still betrayed their origin by certain diversities of physiognomy. One could distinguish among them French, Germans, and Italians; but the respect and fervour of all were alike."

In a visit of devotion to the abbey of Einsiedeln, Queen Hortense laid upon the altar of the celebrated Swiss Madonna a superb branch of *hortensia,* made of large diamonds.

Volumes have been written in Switzerland, on the miracles worked by the Madonna of Einsiedeln: we will select from these marvellous accounts only one fantastic legend of the seventeenth century, which we found in a very rare book of devotion, printed at Fribourg. The Swiss piously believe in the authenticity of this strange fact; the French are free to disbelieve it.

In one of those immense halls of the middle ages, the walls of which were adorned with paintings in fresco, of the most frightful character, and around which were seen stone seats, which are found only in the feudal manors of Germany, some Swiss gentlemen were seated at table, who passed round the Rhenish wine in large cups. At the most interesting time of the German feast, and as a young officer, of the name of Berthold, was saying the most foolish things, a pilgrim was introduced, who was going alone and barefoot to Our Lady of the Hermits, and whom the approach of a tempest, which already made the great pines of a neighbouring forest creak, and the waves of the lake roar, which extended itself at the foot of the mountain, compelled to beg hospitality. The lord arose from his place, and courteously led his new guest to the corner of a wide Gothic fireplace, where whole trunks of oak were burning. This duty fulfilled, Berthold, without any respect for the austere presence of the traveller, resumed the foolish and impious discourse which he had interrupted, now and then giving a sidelook at the pilgrim, to ascertain the effect produced upon him by his audacious and wicked words: but the pale and emaciated countenance of the holy man preserved the immobility of marble. When the feast was over, the guests called for their horses, to return to their several homes. "The night is dark," said the lord to the young miscreant, who had the honour to belong to his family; "you have to pass through a defile which is haunted by those wandering spirits who move about the world in the dark, to do mischief. . . . . I am afraid you may meet with some sad adventure; believe me, and stay here."

"Bah!" replied the officer, laughing, who was in the service of France, "I fear neither God nor devil!"

"Are you quite sure of that?" said the pilgrim in a tone of dark raillery, which frightened the rest.

"So sure, my good pilgrim, that I drink to Lucifer, and ask him to escort me to-night, if he is disengaged."

"You would richly deserve it," cried the lord of the place.

"We will pray to Our Lady for you," said the traveller; "you will stand in need of it."

"I will not trouble you to do so," replied Berthold, saluting the holy man in derision. A few minutes after, he was on horseback, and singing the burden of a Bacchanalian song, as he descended the sloping heath, which was crowned by the little fortified castle.

The hour was late, the silence profound, and the solitude absolute; the moon, full and solitary, shone, at times, amid huge black clouds, in a starless sky, and broad flashes of lightning darted across the horizon. The young nobleman, for some cause or other, stopped singing, but kept on swearing. At length he arrived at the dangerous place to which his relative had alluded, and which bore the name of the *Devil's way*, a name common enough in Switzerland. It was a deep gorge, hollowed out between the red sides of two mountains, a sinister place, where the Alpine goatherd would hardly have trusted himself in broad daylight. At that late hour, when the stillness and darkness made superstitions formidable, the young Swiss, uneasy at times, kept his hand upon his sword; then he was ashamed of himself, and laughed at his fear. "I have solemnly called upon Lucifer to serve me as a torch-bearer," said the miscreant, who wanted to give his pride the satisfaction of a bravado; "but he turns a deaf ear . . . . or else hell is empty."

The thunder rolled at a distance, and a long flash lighting up the woods and mountains let him see two hideous dwarfs at his horse's head,—"Ah!" said the officer, who felt himself growing pale; then, resuming all his insolence, "Begone, infernal crew!" cried he, furiously brandishing his sword; "ye two miserable *bergmännlein* (dwarfs)! you might frighten a cowherd of the Alps."

The *bergmännlein* disappeared, and the galloping of two horses, who came down the almost vertical steep of the mountain, as swift as the wind, made Berthold quickly turn his head. They were two horsemen, covered with black armour, and mounted on horses of the same colour. Their eyes glared like burning

lamps through their vizors, which were down; on their arms was hung, by a small chain of polished steel, the *morgenstern* of ancient Germany, which was a battle club, armed with long iron spikes, which seemed still red with human blood; and jack-o'-lanterns played on their helmets in the form of crests.

The dark horsemen ranged themselves, in silence, by the side of the pale officer, snatched the reins from his trembling hands, and the three horses set off with the swiftness of the wind: mountains after mountains disappeared; sparks of fire were struck from the flint stones of the roads; the distance was no sooner perceived than it was swallowed up. Soon they passed over the frail bridges of flexible branches, beneath which cataracts roar, and where the bold chamois hunter hardly dares to set his foot. Thus they reached the region of eternal snows, and the horses redoubling their furious pace, made for a gulf, at the bottom of which rolled, at a depth which made one giddy, a torrent, the noise of which was scarcely perceptible. All on a sudden, from the midst of those dark waters, reddened at intervals by subterraneous fires, a multitude of hollow and hoarse voices were heard. "Vengeance! vengeance!" they cried; "give up the seducer, the false friend, the duellist, to us!"

"We are bringing him!" replied the horsemen, brandishing their heavy battle-clubs. A cold sweat ran down from the forehead of Berthold; his hair stood on end with fear, and his features shrunk up with convulsions of horror; for among these accusing voices, there were the well-known accents of voices which went to his very soul; remorse began to speak as loudly as fear.

"Give up to us the lawless gambler, the detractor, the blasphemer, the false swearer!" cried out the voices from the abyss.

The dark guides of Berthold, laughing in the hollow of their helmets, with a kind of metallic grin, horrible to hear, replied to the subterranean voices, "We are bringing him! we are bringing him!"

"Bring us the impious wretch!"

"We bring him!" howled out the black horsemen.

Berthold almost lost his senses.

Already the three travellers were close to the extreme edge of an abrupt rock, at the bottom of which was the hollow abyss which clamoured so imperiously for the Helvetian nobleman. Another second and all would be over with him! . . . . . But, behold! all at once, the two horsemen, in the middle of a furious gallop, remain motionless, like two equestrian statues of black marble. The faint sound of a bell had just died away upon the snow-covered plain; it was the midnight office which was rung at Our Lady of Einsiedeln. Berthold understood that the influence of the Blessed Virgin had paralysed the terrible power which was dragging him to hell, and hastily making the sign of the cross, he recommended himself ardently and sincerely to the protecting Madonna, who seemed to interpose between him and the exemplary punishment which he acknowledged, with compunction, that he had deserved. The bell ceased, and the young officer felt a horrible palpitation of his heart when he saw the two horsemen violently moving upon their black coursers. But the voice of repentance had penetrated to the starry throne of Mary, and the phantoms, after gestures of rage and regret, precipitated themselves to the bottom of the gulf, leaving Berthold on the edge of it. The moon which had quite cleared itself from the clouds, which had before darkened the sky, shone like a golden lamp in the height of the firmament, and magnificently lighted up the landscape; the officer discovered, to his great surprise, that he was on one of the highest shelves of Mount Rigi, from which he had great difficulty in descending. Some days afterwards, the young lord went barefoot to Our Lady of the Hermits, to the profound astonishment of his festive companions, and made a vow, in expiation of his orgies, that no beverage should henceforth pass his lips but the water of the spring.

In an unknown corner of the canton of Unterwald, on the border of a path which, like a long serpent, winds along among the fallen fragments with which the side of the mountain is covered, at the narrowest point of the passage, where the traveller,

contemplating at his feet still deeper precipices, and above his head more frightful fragments, advances between two threatenings of death, arises a small open oratory, decorated with homely pictures representing the Blessed Virgin. This sweet object, thus placed far away from every habitation and all succour, has received the name of Our Lady of the Passer by. This place, often accursed, was called, not long ago, the *Devil's Strainer.* After trying every means to make it more safe, they thought of building a chapel there, and placing in it a holy image, that no one might forget, however great might be his fear or danger, to invoke the name of our good God, and make the sign of the cross. But where were workmen to be found venturesome enough to work there? Several, however, offered themselves, who went thither, after arming their hearts with piety by the help of the Holy Mass. And the Mother of God, to prove to these pious workmen that their courage in contending with superstitious terrors and real dangers was pleasing to her, secured the tottering rocks by *threads of the Virgin* fastened on to blades of grass and the moss of the rocks. "From that time," say the Swiss of Unterwald, "the passage has been safe; no accidents happen there, either by day or night. Our Lady is so good, that she protects all that pass by, even those who do not see her, or will not pay honour to her."[1]

The pilgrimage of Maria Zell, in Austria, hardly yields in celebrity to that of Our Lady of Einsiedeln. Its founder, whose name is lost, was a religious of the Abbey of St. Lambert, who came to settle, about the middle of the twelfth century, in the valley of Affluez, in order to convert to the faith certain people of Carinthia, who were still idolaters. This pious German missionary brought with him a little statue of the Blessed Virgin, carved in wood of the lime-tree, which he exposed to the veneration of his neophytes on the aged trunk of a fallen tree, for want of another pedestal. The Carinthian shepherds sheltered the little Madonna as well as they could beneath a hut similar to the

(1) See M. Veuillot, Voyage en Suisse, 1839.

cabins of the woodmen, and came in crowds to pray to her in this poor habitation, where their simple petitions were often granted by the powerful Virgin.

Such were the humble beginnings of that famous pilgrimage, of which the pilgrims now-a-days are princes and emperors. In 1220 Henry, Margrave of Moravia, and his wife, Agnes, out of gratitude for a wonderful cure obtained through the intercession of Mary, built the chapel of stone which is seen in the middle of the church, and the altar of which received the image, which till then had remained on the trunk of the tree. Louis I., King of Hungary, after an unexpected victory over the Turks, built the church which encloses the chapel. The Mussulmans came to Maria-Zell in 1530, but at the moment when their chief directed the point of his lance against the miraculous statue of the Blessed Virgin, he was struck with blindness, and his soldiers, seized with affright, fled away. The Emperors Mathias, Ferdinand II., Ferdinand III., and Leopold I., made a pilgrimage to Maria-Zell. Maria Teresa made her first communion there in 1728; the Emperor Francis went there himself in 1814, and the present emperor, who is no less devout to Mary than his great ancestors, has just performed this pilgrimage with the empress and part of his court; a magnificent offering in precious stones signalised the munificence of the two illustrious pilgrims, who came to implore the support of the Queen of heaven to govern their people wisely and paternally, as did their glorious and Catholic predecessors.

On the coast of the Illyrian sea, three hundred and fifty fathoms above its level, arises a mountain which bears the name of *Monte Santo;* on the top of this mountain is a monastery of Franciscans, where people go to venerate the miraculous image of St. Mary of Castagnavizza; King Charles X., a beneficent prince and a pious monarch, reposes there under the guardianship of the heavenly protectress of France; one day, perhaps, when stormy passions are stilled, six feet of French ground may be granted to the descendant of St. Louis, Henry IV., and Louis XIV.

In the palatinate of Kalish, in Poland, there is a small town seated on a height, in a very strong position, the fortifications of which, in modern style, were boasted of by a traveller, who passed through that kingdom about the year 1750. The town, which was always guarded by companies of artillery, was that of Czenstochowa, much more famed for its abbey of *Fathers of Death*, or religious of the Congregation of St. Paul, which contained a miraculous picture of Mary, than for anything else; Poles and foreigners flocked to this sanctuary, where every rich pilgrim left magnificent offerings. Besides the picture of the Madonna, which the religious affirmed to be the real portrait of the Blessed Virgin painted by St. Luke, a rather bold opinion, they used to exhibit to the veneration of the faithful a relic less disputed; the table at which the Holy Family took their meals. Polish sentinels of honour were placed at the gates of the sanctuary of Our Lady of Czenstochowa, and at different parts of the monastery; fresh blown flowers were laid every morning at the feet of the Blessed Virgin; but all the sweet and simple grace of the veneration of Mary could not exclude a sort of religious horror from this chapel, which froze one's blood. The catacombs, with their lugubrious accompaniments of human bones, were hardly more frightful than those monks, like spectres, who wore upon their black habits death's heads with two cross bones, such as we see on mortuary palls,[1] and who had painted skulls in a hundred places in their church. This devotion to the Virgin of Czenstochowa has been transplanted into France by the Poles in our days. A pious Polish family, who live in the environs of Paris, moved by a similar feeling to that which led the widow of Hector to give the renowned name of the Simois to an obscure rivulet of Epirus, has conceived the truly affecting idea of inaugurating the image of the tutelary Madonna of Poland in an aged oak of the forest of St. Germain's. On the 13th of August, 1840, a Polish priest, in presence of a numerous attendance of Poles of both sexes, dedicated the holy image in the noble tree, which had

(1) Hist. des Ordres Monastiques, t. iii. c. 44.

been chosen for a temple no doubt for want of money to build one; then the whole assembly, kneeling on the grass, began to recite, with voices full of emotion and with tears, the litanies of the Blessed Virgin; then they prayed for the dead, for their distant country; they implored of Heaven more prosperous days, and retired after reanimating their courage with that sentiment of religion which enables us to bear so many things.

Belgium has ever been distinguished among all the countries of Europe for its tender devotion to Mary; of the numerous places of pilgrimage which she possessed and still possesses, we will only refer to that of Our Lady of Hall, of which Justus Lipsius, one of the most distinguished scholars of the seventeenth century, has left us an interesting description.

Our Lady of Hall, situated in a beautiful town, surrounded by a pleasant and fertile country watered by the Senne, is considered a charming church even in this country, so Catholic, of the ancient Netherlands, where the churches are magnificent. The chapel of the Blessed Virgin is on the left. The statue is of wood, gilt, and has a crown of fine gold. With one hand the Blessed Virgin supports her Divine Son, and with the other she holds out a lily, that charming flower, the emblem of chastity, which the inhabitants of the Pyrenees poetically call *Andredana Maria arrosa* (the rose of the Virgin Mary). She formerly wore on her breast six large pearls, with a fine ruby in the centre. Twelve cities, or towns, which had experienced the effects of her protection, had undertaken to provide her dress. On the first Sunday of September their deputies brought her, every year, twelve magnificent robes, in testimony of gratitude and devotedness. On that day, a solemn procession was made, in which the image was carried in triumph by the deputies of the twelve towns, in the city of Hall and its suburbs. The people of Liege are also accustomed to come thither every year in procession, on the day of Pentecost.[1]

Several princes have contributed to enrich this sanctuary.

(1) Diva Virgo Hallensis; Millot, Hist. des Troubad., t. i. p. 467.

On the altar, according to Justus Lipsius, were the twelve apostles, and at the ends, angels with torches, all of silver. No altar exhibited so great a number of lamps, coats of arms, standards, crosses, chalices, and different figures in gold and silver. Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, had given to it, among other rich presents, a second statue of the Blessed Virgin, with a dragoon and a soldier of silver, both completely armed; his son Charles gave a silver falcon; the Emperor Maximilian enriched this sanctuary with a tree of gold; Charles V. with a coat of arms; Pope Julius II. with a silver lamp. On the right were seen the statues of the Emperor Maximilian, of Albert, Duke of Saxony, and of one of their courtiers on his knees. Above their heads were suspended flags which the conquerors had offered to Mary. There was also to be seen there a remonstrance of silver-gilt, of considerable weight, given by Henry VIII., King of England. Justus Lipsius himself, not satisfied with having carefully written the history of our Lady of Hall, hung up his silver pen before the image of Mary.

Next to the Holy Sepulchre and St. Peter's at Rome, there is not in all Christendom a more famous pilgrimage than that of *La Santissima Casa di Loreto*. The holy house of Nazareth was venerated by the Christians even in the lifetime of the apostles, and St. Helen enclosed it in a temple which received the name of St. Mary. Under the rule of the Arabian caliphs, a crowd of French pilgrims came to adore God and honour his Mother in this simple and poor dwelling, where Jesus and Mary had for a long space of time led a laborious and hidden life; but when the Seldjoucid Turks had subjected their old masters, the pilgrims of Europe, who ventured into Syria to visit Jerusalem and Nazareth, suffered barbarous treatment, the recital of which, inflaming the whole of the West, caused an irruption into Asia.

When Godfrey of Bouillon had been proclaimed King of Jerusalem, Tancred, whose lofty deeds have been sung by Tasso, was named governor of Galilee; this prince, who was very devout to Mary, proved his devotion by the sumptuous offerings with which he enriched the church of Nazareth.

After the disastrous expedition of St. Louis, that corner of the earth, which was regarded as the cradle of Christianity, was defended foot by foot by the brave Knights Templars, who shed tears of rage and blood at the sight of the holy places profaned by the Saracens.

Galilee, whitened with the bones of the Latin warriors, had become Mahometan; "God was not pleased," says Father Torsellini,[1] "that the holy house of Mary should remain exposed to the profanations of barbarians; he caused it to be transported by angels into Sclavonia, and thence to the March of Ancona, in the midst of a wood of laurels belonging to a pious and noble widow named Lauretta." "The report goes," he adds, "that on the arrival of the holy house, the great trees of the Italian forest bent down in token of respect, and kept in that position till the axe, or old age, had levelled them with the ground."

The church of Loretto, one of the finest in Italy, has been adorned, according to their taste, by the popes, who have often come thither on a pilgrimage like the common faithful; three gates of chased bronze give entrance into the holy temple, in the centre of which arises the *Santa Casa* in its clothing of white marble, adorned with magnificent bas-reliefs, designed by Bramante, and executed by Sansovino, Sangallo, and Bandinelli.

The miraculous statue of the Madonna is thirty-three inches high; it is carved in cedar wood, covered with magnificent drapery, and placed on an altar glittering with precious stones.[2] We are assured that the niche which it occupies is covered with plates of gold.[3] A number of lamps, of massive silver, burn before it.

La sala del tesoro no longer displays enough riches to pay the ransom of all Italy; but it has still received, in our days, very magnificent gifts of princes and popes. Among these pious gifts

(1) Historia Lauretana, c. ii. p. 6.

(2) "The altar of the Madonna glitters with gold and precious stones."—(Italy, by Lady Morgan, t. iii. c. 25.)

(3) "La vaga nicehia è ricoferta di lame d'oro."—(Don Vincenzo Murri, Storia della Santa Casa.)

we observe a gold remonstrance, enriched with diamonds, a chalice, and a thurible, offered by the Emperor Napoleon to the *Madonna;* an enamelled chalice, set with rubies and *aqua marinas*, offered, in 1819, by Prince Eugene Beauharnais; another chalice, adorned with brilliants, by the Princess of Bavaria, his spouse; a large cross of gold and diamonds, and a crown of amethysts, rubies, and diamonds, offered in 1816, by the King and Queen of Spain, at the time of their pilgrimage to *Loreto;* a nosegay of diamonds, offered, in 1815, by Maria Louisa, sister of the King of Spain, Queen of Etruria, and Duchess of Lucca; an immense heart of very fine gold, with a precious stone in the centre, suspended from a chain of emeralds and amethysts, the gift of the Emperor of Austria to the Madonna. It would be impossible to enumerate the precious stones and rich presents of all kinds offered by princes and kings, under the simple title of *dono di una pia persona*, in the register containing the names of benefactors to the *Santa Casa.*

The beautiful litany of Our Lady of Loretto was the votive offering with which a celebrated Florentine composer, of the early years of the eighteenth century, repaid a miracle of the Blessed Virgin. This composer, whose name was Barroni, all at once lost his hearing, like Beethoven; after having exhausted the succour of art without success, he invoked that of Mary, and set out on a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Loretto. There he was cured, after praying with faith, and in his gratitude to the Holy Madonna, he composed, by inspiration, in her praise, a chorus, which, under the title of *Litanie della Santa Casa*, was performed for the first time on the 15th of August, 1737. This litany was repeated every year afterwards for the feast of the Madonna; Rossini, happening to pass by Our Lady of Loretto, was struck with the charm of this composition, and is said to have introduced it into his *Tancredi.*[1]

The popes have delighted to testify their respect for Mary, by making her miraculous sanctuary of *Loreto* the object of their

(1) Gazette Musicale.

devout solicitude. Pope Pius V. offered to the *Santa Casa* two silver statues of St. Peter and St. Paul; he did still better by diverting from its natural channel a river, the waters of which, sluggish and in great measure stagnant, sent up the most unwholesome exhalations to the top of the hill, where a small town has been formed, under the shadow of the magnificent church of Mary. Gregory XIII. founded a college for young Illyrians, in the actual enclosure of *Loreto*, by way of consoling the Dalmatians for the loss of the Madonna, who only stopped a moment with them, the better to take her flight to the fair shores of Italy. Sixtus V. founded the order of Knights of Loretto, specially devoted to defend the shores of the Italian Mediterranean against the incursions of barbarians. Benedict XIV., embellished this sanctuary with truly persevering generosity, where Pius VII., having recovered his liberty, came to kneel, before his entrance into Rome, and where he left, as a memorial of his visit, a superb gold chalice, with this inscription: "Pius VII., sovereign pontiff, restored to liberty on the day of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and coming from France to Rome, left at Loretto this monument of his devotion and gratitude." His holiness Gregory XVI. also made a pilgrimage to Loretto.

In Spain, Mount Montserrat has been dedicated to the veneration of Mary, a mountain standing alone, ten leagues from Barcelona, which was, according to the celebrated naturalist Humboldt, the great Atlas of the ancients, at the foot of which the fine kingdom of Valencia displayed the golden apples of the garden of the Hesperides. This mountain, which owed its name of *Monte Serrats* (sawed mountain) to its extraordinary form, seems as if composed of inlaid work, which makes it look as if divided and covered with spiral cones, or pine cones; so that it appears, from afar, to have been the work of men. At a distance, it is a pile of grottoes and Gothic pyramids; when near, each cone appears a mountain by itself; and all the cones, terminated by needles, or points, which make a great noise when the wind blows, form an enormous mass of about five leagues in

circumference. It was probably this singular conformation that led to the invention of the fable of the giants, who had heaped mountain upon mountain to scale the heavens.

It is on a platform of this celebrated mountain that the superb convent has been built, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, which is one of the most celebrated pilgrimages of Christendom. An inscription, of the year 1239, preserved in the convent above a large picture of the same period, thus records the foundation of this fine monastery: "In the year 808, under the government of the Count of Barcelona, Geoffry le Velu, three young shepherds having one night seen a great light descend from the sky, and heard melodious music in the air, informed their relations of it. The bailiff and the Bishop of Mauresa having repaired, with all these people, to the spot which they pointed out, saw likewise the light from heaven, and after some search, they discovered the image of the Blessed Virgin, which they wanted to remove to Mauresa; but, being come to the place where the monastery now stands, they could not advance any farther. This prodigy induced the Count of Barcelona to build a convent of women there, from which he took the nuns of the royal abbey of *Las Puellas* of Barcelona; the first abbess of Our Lady of Montserrat was his daughter Richilda, who took possession of it about the year 895. This community of nuns subsisted till 976, when the Count of Barcelona, Borrell, with the consent of the pope, placed Benedictin monks at Montserrat."

The convent of Montserrat is a grand and noble edifice, situated on a platform very confined, and projecting from the mountain, which bears the name of St. Mary's platform; enormous rocks project above it, which seem every moment ready to fall; it is defended by the steep points of the mountain, as by natural fortifications, and on the accessible side by six strong towers. Besides the convent and church of Our Lady, the fortified enclosure contains a house of entertainment for travellers, a hospital, and an infirmary. The church of Our Lady of Montserrat has only a nave, but is nevertheless very spacious;

the stalls of the choir are of very remarkable workmanship. The image of the Blessed Virgin has a face almost black, like those of Toledo and Guadeloupe, and many others which are visited in Spain; it is painted all over, and represented in an advanced age; though very brown, the face is graceful: she is seated on a seat made in the form of a throne, and holds in her right hand a globe, from which springs a *fleur de lis*, while she supports with the other hand the Infant Jesus, seated on her lap, giving a blessing with his right hand, and holding in the other a globe, surmounted by a cross.

The inhabitants of the mountain, divided into four classes, namely, monks, hermits, choristers, and lay brothers, succeed each other uninterruptedly in their prayers. The arrangement of the places is such, that from several of the hermitages the chanting of the monastery is heard, and the sound of the bells of the different hermits, repeated by the echoes, is united in the turnings and anfractuousness of the mountain. From the summit of Montserrat, the kingdoms of Valentia and Murcia are seen, and even as far as the Balearic Isles, which forms the finest prospect in the world.

Princes and kings of Spain often climbed on foot the steep path which leads to the altar of Mary, and innumerable captives came there to hang up the chains which they had worn among the Moors. St. Ignatius of Loyola, before he devoted his life to religion, came thither to *watch his arms*, according to the usages and customs of that old chivalry, of which his head was then full. After passing the night in prayer, and solemnly dedicating himself to the Blessed Virgin as her knight, according to the warlike ideas which he still had in his mind, and under which he conceived the things of God, says F. Bouhours, his historian, he hung up his sword on a pillar near the altar, in token of his renunciation of secular warfare; then, after communicating early in the morning, he left Montserrat.

Our Lady *del Pilar*, at Saragossa, is one of the oldest and most magnificent places of pilgrimage in Spain. King Ferdinand repaired thither with Queen Christina a short time

before his death, and both, after praying very devoutly, like Catholic royal personages, as they were, before the venerable image of the Blessed Virgin of Saragossa, left her, on going away, proofs of their munificence.

The cathedral, dedicated to Mary, is a grand edifice, a hundred and fifty feet long, with a spacious nave and aisles, and an infinite number of chapels. Modern travellers have celebrated its chapels of marble and jasper, on the sides of which were hung up votive offerings of gold, silver, and precious stones; its silver lamps gave so dazzling a light on walls covered with brilliant and precious ornaments, that the result was a vertiginous brightness around the statue, itself sparkling with precious stones, which made it completely disappear in the midst of this *mirage* produced by the lights, the splendour of the gold, and the glittering of the rubies and diamonds. The attire of the Virgin, placed in a standing posture on a pillar of jasper, which may be three feet high, was valued then at several millions.

A place of pilgrimage, still very celebrated in Spain, is that of Our Lady of Guadeloupe. F. Marian assures us that this image, which was already famous in the fourth century, was sent by Pope Gregory the Great to St. Leander, Bishop of Seville. The king, Don Alphonso, in 1340, endowed this sanctuary, which he reunited to his own private domain. Forty-nine years after, Don John I. gave it to certain Hieronomite monks, adding to it the lordship of a large town, which had grown up near it. The convent, which took the name of *Santa Maria*, is situated in the middle of the present city; and, as the times when it was founded were very insecure, it has more the appearance of a superb citadel, than of a peaceful monastery. There is an infirmary for the sick poor, a house of entertainment for strangers, two colleges, and two fine cloisters.

In 1389, the celebrated Spanish architect, John Alphonso, began the church, which has a nave and two aisles, and the walls of which are ornamented with magnificent votive offerings, attesting, as the Spaniards say, more than three thousand

authentic miracles of the Blessed Virgin. The image of the Blessed Virgin is upon the high altar, which, but a few years ago, was lighted by more than a hundred lamps of massive silver. She is clothed in a white robe, and holds the Divine Infant in her arms. Queen Dona Maria, wife of Don John II., his son, Don Henry, and some other princes, have chosen to be buried in this church, which is decorated with excellent tapestry by Zurbaran and Jordan.

The veneration for Our Lady de la Guadeloupe crossed the ocean, and was established by miracles in Mexico, a country totally devoted to the Mother of God. An account printed at Rome in 1786 relates that a converted Indian, who went every Saturday a journey to Mexico, situated eight miles from his village, to hear mass in honour of the Blessed Virgin, had a miraculous apparition upon a hill which had formerly enjoyed great celebrity among the Mexican idolaters, who called it *Tepijacac*, and had consecrated it to *Tonantim*, the mother of the gods. One Saturday, the 9th of December, in the year 1531, the pious Diego, passing by the foot of this hill, heard a sweet harmony, which he took at first for the singing of birds, and which, after listening to more attentively, he was tempted to attribute to angels. There was spread over the *Tepijacac* a cloud with a rainbow, on which were displayed the most beautiful colours; a sweet voice issued from it, which called the pious Mexican by his name. Full of astonishment, and quite unable to account for so marvellous an adventure, Diego climbed up the hill, on the top of which he perceived a woman of the most majestic beauty; floods of light streamed from her white garments, which, being reflected on the surrounding rocks, seemed to have transformed them into precious stones. The Blessed Virgin, for she it was, told Diego that it was her pleasure that there should be built a temple in her honour upon this hill, under the name of Our Lady de la Guadeloupe, and enjoined him to inform Juan de Zumarraga, who was at that time Bishop of Mexico. The prelate heard this recital in silence, and dismissed the Mexican, telling him that he must

have a positive guarantee for the truth of his words, and some more assured sign of the will of Heaven. Informed by her messenger of the failure of his commission, the Blessed Virgin ordered him to go up to the top of the hill, and gather there a bunch of flowers. It was not the season for flowers; and the top of that rock had never produced anything but briers and thorns; but Diego obeyed nevertheless, without making any reply, and his faith was rewarded; for he soon saw himself in the midst of the most odoriferous and splendid flowers. He made a nosegay of them, which Mary ordered him to present to the bishop. "He will believe this time," said the Blessed Virgin, with a smile.

Diego goes to the episcopal palace, where the scent of the flowers concealed under his cloak attracts the attention of the officers of the bishop's establishment; they oblige Diego to let them see them, and want to handle them. But to their great surprise, the flowers are impressed upon the cloth; they are no longer any more than painted roses and lilies! The bishop appears, and Diego, opening the folds of his dress, perfumed with a heavenly odour, finds, to his great astonishment, that the flowers, as they became blended together, have formed a delightful picture of Mary. The prelate, after bending profoundly, takes off the cloak from the shoulders of the Mexican, and exposes it in his chapel, until another sanctuary should be raised for it, which they made haste to build, in the place marked out by the Blessed Virgin. When the edifice was built, the picture was translated thither, which from that time wrought a number of miracles, and became the most celebrated Madonna of America.

This new sanctuary not being able to contain the crowds that flocked to it, they thought of building another, about the year 1695. The Archbishop of Mexico, Francis de Aguiar and Seixas, laid the first stone. This is the splendid church, admired at this day; the sum of 2,270,000 livres was expended upon it. On the 1st of May, 1709, the holy picture was translated thither, which was placed on a throne of silver, valued at 400,000 francs.

As the offerings kept multiplying, day by day, rich altars were erected of beautiful marbles; the treasury was enriched with costly vessels. The great lamp of filigree work weighs alone more than six hundred and twenty marks, and the workmanship surpasses the material. Around the sanctuary runs a large balustrade of silver, which is continued to the choir, which, according to the custom of Spain, occupies the end of the church. This first balustrade is protected by a second one of a precious wood, ornamented with an infinite number of small figures in silver, of exquisite workmanship. A viceroy of Mexico, Don Antonio Maria Buccarelli, surrounded the picture with a cornice of massive gold, and enriched the altar with twelve golden candlesticks. In 1749, a chapter was founded for the service of this sanctuary. Mexico was solemnly dedicated to Our Lady of Guadeloupe, and a holiday of obligation was fixed for the 12th of December, under the rite of a double of the first class, with a privileged octave. Benedict XIV. extended this feast to all the States of his Catholic majesty. A city sprung up around this sanctuary. Guadeloupe is to America what Loretto is to Europe. The image represents the Immaculate Conception, with this inscription, *Non fecit taliter omni nationi.*[1]

Our Lady of Lampadouza, placed, like a beacon, between Malta and Africa, upon a small desert island, but on which the lamp, kept up alternately by Christians and Mussulmans, remained perpetually lighted for centuries; Our Lady of Monte Nero, which overlooks Leghorn, and the church of which, frequented by an innumerable crowd of pilgrims and encumbered with votive offerings, commands that fine sea of Tuscany, where the young women of Italy go, on the eves of the feasts of the Madonna, to cast down garlands of flowers, which formerly used to be offered to the nymphs of Amphytrite; Our Lady of Mercy, near Savona, in the valley of St. Bernard, the most beautiful

(1) The Mexicans, to testify their respect for Our Lady of Guadeloupe, have just given her name to their first steam vessel.

sanctuary which the piety of the Genoese has constructed on its shore in honour of Mary; Our Lady of Consolation, at Turin; of Charme, in Maurienne; of Abimes, near Chambery; of Passaw, where the French priests, driven out by revolutionary bayonets, went to pray that they might one day behold their country again, regretting the streams of France, on the banks of the majestic Danube, the king of the rivers of Germany.

For the other sanctuaries of Mary scattered over all parts of the world, we refer the reader to the following historical calendar. This calendar, published during the minority of Louis XIV., includes every place of pilgrimage to the Blessed Virgin throughout Christendom, and a great number of pious foundations, which render it very valuable; it is moreover a very scarce work, no longer found in libraries. It is superfluous to say that things have changed, and that a great number of religious edifices consecrated to the Mother of God, which then flourished, are now nothing more than a mass of ruins; time and revolutions have not marched onward for nothing. This calendar, which completes our work on the pilgrimages, is given on no other warrant than that of the authorities which the author himself adduces, with its dates and miracles, such as it existed for centuries.

HISTORICAL CALENDAR

OF

FEASTS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN:

FOUNDATIONS AND DEDICATIONS OF CHURCHES IN HONOUR OF OUR BLESSED LADY.

"Fecit mihi magna qui potens est."

HISTORICAL CALENDAR

OF

FEASTS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN:

FOUNDATIONS AND DEDICATIONS OF CHURCHES IN HONOUR OF OUR BLESSED LADY.

JANUARY.

1. Dedication of Our Lady of the Annunciation, at Florence, by William D'Estouville, cardinal, in the year 1452. There is preserved in this church a picture of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin, which was found miraculously finished when the painter, who had sketched it, was going to put the finishing strokes to it.—(Archangel; Janius.)

2. Foundation of the Abbey of Dunes, in Flanders, in honour of the Blessed Virgin, in the year 1128, by Foulques, a Benedictine monk.—(Chronic. Bertinense.)

3. Our Lady of Sichem, near Louvain, in the duchy of Brabant. It is said that this image sweated four drops of blood, in the year 1306.—(Just. Lips. in hist. Sichem., cap. 5.)

4. Dedication of Our Lady of Treves, in Germany, in the year 746, by Hydolph, Archbishop of Treves. The Princess Genevieve, wife of Syfrede, Palatine of Treves, and daughter of the Duke of Brabant, had this church built in a wood, on the very spot where Our Lady appeared to her, and assured her that one day her innocence would be acknowledged.—(Additiones ad Molanum de sanctis Belgicis.)

5. It is said that on this day, in the year 1606, a paralytic man was miraculously cured in the Church of Our Lady of Sichem, in Brabant.—(Justus Lipsius in hist. Sichemiensi, cap. 24.)

6. Our Lady having been present on this day, at the marriage feast of Cana, was the cause of her Son, aged then thirty years, changing water into wine; this was his first public miracle.—(S. Epiph. hæres. 51.)

7. Return of Our Lady, with Jesus and St. Joseph, from Egypt into Judea. —(Martyrolog. Rom., 7 Jan.)

8. Our Lady of the Commencement, at Naples. This chapel was built by St. Helen, and consecrated by St. Sylvester, in the year 320.—(Petrus Stephanus, de locis sacris Neapolit.)

9. Our Lady beyond the Tiber, at Rome. This church was built by Calixtus I. in the year 224.—(Baronius in apparatu ad annal. et in Annal. ad Ann. 224.)

10. Our Lady of the Guides, at Constantinople, where one of the distaffs of the Blessed Virgin was shown, with some of the clothes of the Infant Jesus, which St. Pulcheria had given to this church.—(Niceph., Tract. 3, cap. 7.)

11. Our Lady of Bessiere, in Limousin. A certain heretic, who had derided the devotion paid to this image, saw his house on fire, without being able to discover whence the fire originated.—(Triple Cour., l. i., Trait. 2, S. 10, n. 6.)

12. Our Lady of the Broad Street, at Rome, situated on the very spot where St. Paul remained for two years, wearing an iron chain, where he preached the Gospel, and wrote several of his epistles.—(Triple Cour., *loco cit.*, n. 6.)

13. Pius V. reforms the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin, in the year 1571.—(Balinghem in Calend.)

14. Our Lady of the Word, near Montserrat, in Spain, so called because it is asserted that she restored speech to a dumb man, in the year 1514. —(Balinghem in Calend.)

15. Our Lady of the Portico, at Rome, where an image is seen which is said to have been brought from heaven by an angel to the Blessed Galla, widow of the consul Symmachus.—(Ex monument. S. Mariæ in Portic.)

16. Our Lady of Montserrat, in Spain, delivers miraculously on this day several captives from the tyranny of the Turks.—(Hist. Montierr.)

17. Our Lady of Peace, at Rome. In the year 1483, the Duke of Calabria, having besieged Rome, to be revenged on Sixtus IV., for having prevented him from giving assistance to the Duke of Ferrara against the Venetians, this sovereign pontiff addressed himself to the Queen of heaven, and obliged himself by vow to build her a church, under the title of Our Lady of Peace, if it should please her to deliver the city from the siege, and to restore peace to Italy. His prayer having been heard, he fulfilled his vow, by having a church built, which was finished by Innocent VIII., his successor.—(Gabriel Pennotus in hist. tripartita Canon regal., lib. iii. cap. 33, § 2.)

18. Our Lady of Dijon, in Burgundy. This image, formerly named of Good Hope, delivered the city from the fury of the Swiss, in the year 1513;

in thanksgiving for this favour, there is a general procession there every year.—(Triple Cour. n. 42.)

19. Our Lady of Gimout, near Toulouse. This church of Citeaux is much celebrated in the country for its miracles.—(Triple Cour., n. 34.)

20. Our Lady of the Tables, at Montpellier. A renowned and very ancient church. In the arms of the city the Virgin is seen holding her divine Son in her arms, upon a bezant, gules.—(Triple Cour., n. 38.)

21. Our Lady of Consolation, at Rome, at the foot of the Capitol. This Madonna began to work miracles in the year 1471.—(Triple Cour., n. 43.)

22. Desponsation of Our Lady. This feast, celebrated in France long ago by certain devout persons, was approved by Pope Paul III., in 1546.—(Petr. Auratus, lib. de Imag. Virt., c. 10.)

23. Desponsation of Our Lady, according to the use of Arras. This feast began to be celebrated in the year 1556.—(Monum. Eccles. Atrebat.)

24. Our Lady of Damascus. It is asserted that there oozes out from this picture, which is painted on wood, a miraculous oil which restored sight in the year 1203, to the Sultan of Damascus, and that, infidel as he was, in acknowledgment of this benefit, he founded a lamp to burn perpetually before this picture.—(Spond. in Annal. ad ann. 1203.)

25. Translation of the winding-sheet and tomb of Our Lady to Constantinople, by Juvenal, Bishop of Jerusalem, under the empire of Marcian, in the year 455.—(Ferreol. Locrius in Chron. anacephal.)

26. Our Lady of Long-Champs, founded, in 1261, by Elizabeth, sister of St. Louis.—(Gallia Christ., t. iv.)

27. Our Lady of Life, at Venasque, in Provence. The chronicle relates that this image has often restored life to children who have died without baptism, in order that they might receive that sacrament.—(Triple Cour., n. 89.)

28. Our Lady of Good Succour, near Rouen. This image is very celebrated in the country.—(Ex archiv. hujus ecclesiæ.)

29. Our Lady of Châtillon sur Seine. St. Bernard had great devotion to this image, on account of a miracle which it wrought in his favour.—(Triple Cour., n. 43.)

30. Our Lady of the Rose, at Lucca, in Italy. Three roses were found in the month of January, in the arms of this image, according to a Latin chronicle. —(Cæsar Franciot. in hist. Lucensi.)

31. Apparition of Our Lady to Sister Angela de Foligny.—(In ejus vita.)

FEBRUARY.

1. Eve of the Purification of Our Lady, at Paris.—(Locrius in Calend.)

2. The Purification of Our Lady. This feast was instituted in the year 544, under the Emperor Justinian, on occasion of the plague which ravaged Constantinople, where there often died ten thousand persons in a single day. In the year 701, Pope Sergius added to this feast the solemn ceremony of the blessed candles.—(Baronius in Annal. ad ann. 544.)

3. Our Lady of Seidaneida, near Damascus. There exuded from this picture, which was painted on wood, an oil which was never exhausted, whatever quantity was taken. The virtue of this oil was so great, that it healed even the infidels themselves.—(Arnold. Abbas Lubec, apud Baron., ad ann. 870, et apud Spondan, ad ann. 1203.)

4. Our Lady of the Pillar, at Saragossa, in Spain; so called, because, according to the tradition, the Blessed Virgin appeared to St. James the Great, upon a pillar of jasper, in the year 36, and ordered him to build a church, which the Spaniards maintain to have been the first dedicated to Our Lady.—(Bentereus, lib. i. c. et 3.)

5. Dedication of the first temple of Our Lady, by St. Peter, at Tripoli, now Tortosa.—(Canisius, lib. v. de B. Virg., c. 32.)

6. Our Lady of Louvain, in the Low Countries. This Virgin, in high veneration in that country, began to work miracles in the year 1444.—(Balingham in Calend.)

7. Our Lady of Grace, in the Abbey of Saint-Sauve, at Montreuil sur Mar. —(Chronic. S. Salvi.)

8. Our Lady of the Lily, near Melun. This abbey of Cistercian nuns was founded by Queen Blanche, mother of the King St. Louis.—(Gallia Christiana, t. iv.)

9. Octave of the Purification of Our Lady, instituted in the Cathedral of Saintes, on account, it is said, of the bells having been heard to ring of themselves in full harmony. The sacristans having run to the church, saw several unknown men holding lighted tapers and chanting hymns melodiously in honour of the Blessed Virgin, who is venerated in a chapel of this church under the title of Our Lady of Miracles, and approaching softly, they besought one of the last of that august number to give them his taper, in proof of the miracle. This taper is religiously preserved in that church.—(Sausseyus Martyr. Gall. dic. 9.)

10. Our Lady of the Dove, near Bologna, in Italy, built, it is said, in a place which a dove designated, by flying round and round, for the space of two days, about certain masons who were at work, and to whom it seemed to mark out a certain space.—(Triple Cour., n. 107.)

11. St. Mary of Liques, near Calais. This monastery, of the order of the

Premonstratenses, was founded in the year 1131, by Robert, Lord of Liques.—(Gall. Christ., t. iv.)

12. Our Lady of Argenteuil, near Paris, built by Clovis I., in the year 101. This priory preserves a portion of the seamless garment of our Lord.—(Thomas Bosius, lib. ix., de Sig. eccl. c. 9.)

13. Our Lady du Four Chaud, at Bourges, so called because, in the year 545, a Jew is said to have shut up his son in a hot oven, because he had received baptism and communicated on Easter Sunday; he was taken out sound and whole, thanks to the protection of Our Lady. A church was built to the Blessed Virgin in memory of this event.—(Annales de France en Childebert.)

14. Our Lady of Bourbourg, in Flanders. It is asserted that this image having been struck by a wicked man, in the year 1383, the sacrilegious wretch fell dead on the spot.—(Bzovius, ex Archiv. eccles. Burburg.)

15. Our Lady of Paris, first built by King Childebert, in the year 522; about the year 1257, the King St. Louis had a larger one carried on in the same place, on the foundations which King Philip Augustus had laid in the year 1191.—(Du Breuil, Theatre des antiq. de Paris, lib. i.)

16. Our Lady of the Thorn, near Châlons, in Champagne, so named because this image was found under a whitethorn.—(Triple Cour., n. 54.)

17. Our Lady of Constantinople, formerly the synagogue of the Jews, which was converted into a church of the Blessed Virgin by the Emperor Justin the Younger, in the year 566.—(Locrius.)

18. Our Lady of Laon, erected into a cathedral and founded by St. Remigius, Archbishop of Rheims, about the year 500, where he consecrated, as its first bishop, St. Genebaud, his nephew. Miracles are wrought there; and, among others, we read that in the year 1395, there was seen to appear on the steeple, the picture of a crucifix, the wounds of which bled.—(Thomas Walsingham, Hist. of England, on King Richard I.)

19. Our Lady of Good Tidings, near Rouen, where a great number of people are seen, particularly on Saturdays.—(Triple Cour., n. 52.)

20. Our Lady of Boulogne-sur-Mer, where an image is seen, which is said to have been brought in a ship by the ministry of angels, in the year 633. Louis XI. gave to this church a heart of solid gold, weighing two thousand crowns, in the year 1479, and he decreed that all the kings of France, his successors, should make the same present on their succession to the crown.—(Triple Cour., n. 53.)

21. Our Lady of Bon Port, at Dol, affording succour to mariners.—(Triple Cour., n. 51.)

22. Our Lady of Succour, at Rennes, in Britanny.—(Idem.)

23. Our Lady of Roches, near Salamanca, in Spain; an image is there venerated, which was found miraculously, in the year 434, by Simon Vela, who caused a church to be built there.—(Balingham in Calend.)

24. On this day, in the year 591, St. Gregory the Great having had the picture of Our Lady, which was painted by St. Luke, carried in procession, the plague ceased at Rome.—(Balingham in Calend.)

25. Our Lady of Victory, at Constantinople. The city was delivered from the siege of the Saracens by the aid of the Blessed Virgin, in the year 621.—(Fereolus Locrius.)

26. Our Lady *des Champs*, at Paris, anciently dedicated to Ceres. St. Denis, after driving the devils out of it, consecrated it to Our Lady. A picture of the Blessed Virgin is still to be seen there, on a small stone, a foot square, which was made after that which St. Denis brought to France. This house, which is a Benedictine priory, was afterwards occupied by the Carmelites, who were received there in the year 604, and founded by Catherine, Princess of Longueville. It was the first occupied by those nuns in France; the mother Ann of Jesus, the companion of St. Teresa, was its first superior.—(Du Breuil, Theatre des Antiq., lib. ii.)

27. Our Lady of Light, near Lisbon, in Portugal. A light was seen for a long time shining in this place, without the possibility of discovering the cause of that phenomenon, when Our Lady, appearing to a prisoner, promised him his liberty on condition of his procuring a church to be built in her honour in this place, which she had chosen.—(Anton. Vasconcell. in Descript. reg. Lusitan., c. 7, § 5.)

28. Institution of the monastery of the Annunciation, at Bethune, in Artois, by Francis de Melun and Louisa de Foix, his wife, in the year 1519.—(Fereolus Locrius.)

MARCH.

1. Establishment of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady, by Sixtus IV., in the year 1476, and grants of indulgences to those who shall assist at divine service, or at mass.—(T. iv. Conciliorum.)

2. Our Lady of Apparitions, at Madrid, so called because, in the year 1449, the Blessed Virgin appeared during eight following days to a young woman named Yves, and ordered her to build a church in her honour, on the spot where she should find a cross planted to Our Lady.—(In vita B. Joan.)

3. Our Lady of Longport, in Valois. This abbey, of the Cistercian order, was founded in the year 1131, by Josselin, Bishop of Soissons.—(Gall. Christ., t. iv.)

4. Our Lady *de la Garde*, in Arragon, so called for having preserved a child from death, who had fallen into a well, in the year 1221.—(Bzovius, ad ann. 1221.)

5. Our Lady of good Succour, at Nancy, in Lorraine. It is believed that this image enabled René, Duke of Lorraine, to gain a victory over Charles the Bold, the last Duke of Burgundy.—(Triple Cour., n. 55.)

6. Our Lady of Nazareth, at Pierre Noire, in Portugal. This image was honoured at Nazareth in the time of the apostles, if we may believe a writing which was found, by a hunter, attached to this image, in the year 1150.—(Triple Cour., n. 13.)

7. Our Lady of the Star, at Villa Viciosa, in Portugal, so called from a star, which a shepherd saw shining where the church is built.—(Triple Cour., n. 17.)

8. Our Lady of Virtues, at Lisbon, in Portugal.—(Ant. Vasconcell. in Descript. reg. Lusitan., c. 7, § 5.)

9. Foundation of Savigny, in the diocese of Avranches, in Normandy, in honour of the Blessed Virgin, about the year 1112, by the blessed Vitalis, hermit, who was its first abbot.—(Gall. Christ., t. iv.)

10. Our Lady of the Vine, near Viterbo, in Tuscany, a fine church, occupied at present by Dominicans.—(Bzovius, ad ann. 1487.)

11. Our Lady of the Forests, at Porto, in Portugal. This image was found again in a forest, where it had been hidden by Queen Matilda, wife of Alphonsus I.—(Joan. Barrius, lib. de reb. interamnensib., c. 12.)

12. Our Lady of Miracles, in the cloister of St. Maur des Fossés, near Paris. It is said that this image was found made, when the sculptor, named Rumold, was going to work at it.—(Du Breuil, Theatre des Antiq., liv. iv.)

13. Our Lady of the Empress, at Rome. A tradition records that this image spoke to St. Gregory the Great, in the year 593.—(Anton. Yepez, ad ann. 84, divi Benedicti.)

14. Our Lady *de la Brèche*, at Chartres, where a procession takes place every year, in thanksgiving for Our Lady's having delivered the city, when besieged by heretics, in the year 1568. It was during this siege that the image of Our Lady, placed upon the Drouaise gate, could not be injured by the cannon and musket balls, which the besiegers fired at it, and the marks of which are still seen at two or three inches from the image.—(Sebastien Rouillard, Parthenie, c. 3.)

15. In the year 911, the city of Chartres was miraculously delivered from the siege laid to it by Rollo or Raoul, Duke of the Normans; for as he was on the point of taking the city, Gaucelin, the forty-seventh Bishop of Chartres, mounted on the top of the ramparts, holding a relic of Our Lady as an ensign, which struck such terror in the camp, that all retreated in disorder; in memory of this fact, the meadows of the gate of Drouaise are called, to this day, the meadows of the fugitives (*des Reculés*).—(Sebastien Rouillard, Parthenie, c. 7, n. 5.)

16. Our Lady of the Fountain, at Constantinople, built, by the Emperor Leo, in the year 460, in thanksgiving for the Blessed Virgin's having appeared to him on the margin of a spring, to which he was charitably leading a blind man, when he was no more than a common soldier, and foretold to him that he would be emperor.—(Niceph., lib. xv. c. 15.)

17. In the year 1095, under Pope Urban II., a council was held at

Clermont, in Auvergne, at which the office of Our Lady was instituted.—(Concil. Clarom.) Foundation of the Abbey of Baumont-les-Tours, by Ingestrude, in the year 600.—(Gallia Christiana, t. iv.)

18. In the year 1586, Our Lady's, of Loretto, was erected into a cathedral by Sixtus V., from having been before a collegiate church.—(Tursel., Hist. Lauretana, v. 10.)

19. The Beautiful Lady, at Nogent-sur-Seine. It is affirmed that it is impossible to remove this celebrated image from its little chapel, which is only four or five feet square.—(Ex monument. Novigent.)

20. Our Lady of Calevoirt, at Uckelen, near Brussels. This image began to work miracles in the year 1454, which led to the determination to build a magnificent chapel in honour of Our Blessed Lady, in the year 1623, which the Infanta of Spain, Isabella Clara Eugenia, devoutly visited in the same year.—(Aub. Miræus, in Annal. Belg.)

21. Our Lady of Bruges, in Flanders, where a lock of the Blessed Virgin's hair is exhibited, given by a Syrian bishop, named Moses.—(Hugo Farcitus, lib. i. miracul. B. Virg.)

22. On Palm Sunday, in the year 1098, St. Robert, Abbot of Molême, retired with twenty-one of his monks to the diocese of Châlons-sur-Saone, where he built, in honour of Our Lady, the celebrated monastery of Citeaux, the head house of the order.—(Arnold Vionus, lib. i.; Ligni vitæ, c. 47.)

23. Our Lady of Victory. This image bears that name, because the French having fortunately taken it from the hands of the Greeks, during a sanguinary engagement which they had with them near Constantinople, in the year 1204, they gained by means of it a complete victory.—(Spondanus in Annal., ad ann. 1204.)

24. Eve of the Annunciation of Our Lady, instituted by Gregory II. On this day, Our Lady kept the Passover at Jerusalem, in the year of our Lord 49.—(Balingh. Metaphrastes.)

25. The Annunciation of Our Lady. This feast was instituted by the apostles, and is the most ancient of all.—(Joan. Bonifacius, lib. ii., Hist. Virg., c. 5.)

26. Our Lady of Soissons, occupied by Benedictine monks. In this abbey is seen one of the shoes of Our Lady.—(Hugo Farcitus.)

27. Apparition of Our Lord to Our Lady as soon as he was risen from the dead.—(Alphons. a Castro, c. 17.)

28. Our Lady of Castelbruedo, at Olian, in Catalonia. It is related that every year, on the day of the Annunciation, three lights were seen of a blue colour, which shone through the glass windows of this church, lighted the lamps and wax candles, went out by the same way, and immediately disappeared.—(Ludo Marinæus, lib. v., de reb. Hisp., c. ultimo.)

29. Apparition of Our Lady to St. Bonet, Bishop of Clermont, in Auvergne,

whom she ordered to say mass one night when he had remained in the church to pray. The saint leaning against a pillar, as if to hide himself, the stone became soft and made the place for him, which is seen to this day. But the Blessed Virgin having obliged him to officiate, the ceremony being finished, she left him the chasuble which had been brought him by angels to celebrate in. The heavenly present is still to be seen at Clermont, where it is preserved with great care.—(In ejus vita, apud Surium, die 15 Jan.)

30. Re-establishment of the chapel of Our Lady, at Boulogne-sur-mer, by Claude Dormy, bishop of that city.—(Triple Cour., n. 53.)

31. Our Lady of the Holy Cross, at Jerusalem, where is kept a part of Our Lady's veil, given by St. Helen.—(Onuphrius, lib. vii. Eccl.)

APRIL.

1. Octave of the Annunciation of Our Lady, in the Carmelite order.—(Balingh. in Calend.)

2. Our Lady the Great, at Poitiers, where is shown an image of the Blessed Virgin, in whose hands the keys of the city were found miraculously while the mayor's servant was looking everywhere for them, to open the gates to the English, to whom he had promised to betray the city.—(Jean Boucher, Annal. d'Aquit.)

3. Apparition of our Lord to Our Lady and the apostles in the supper-room, eight days after his resurrection.—(Balingh. in Calend.)

4. Our Lady of Grace, in Normandy. This image is very famous in the country, and people come to venerate it from all parts.—(Ex Archiv. hujus eccl.)

5. Apparition of Our Lady to Pope Honorius IV., for the confirmation of the Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.—(Balingh. in Calend.)

6. Our Lady of the Conception, at the Capuchin Convent of Douay, in Flanders, where is seen a picture of the Immaculate Conception, which was miraculously preserved from fire, in the year 1553.—(Amatus Francisc. in libello MS.)

7. Our Lady of the Forsaken, at Valencia, in Spain. This image is in a chapel, where it is said that a great noise is made when any one is drowned or assassinated in the environs of the city.—(Triple Cour., n. 28.)

8. Feast of the Miracles of Our Lady, at Cambron, near Mons, in the Low Countries.—(Locrius.)

9. Our Lady of Myans, near Chambery, in Savoy. It is believed that this image, in the year 1249, prevented the thunder, which had already consumed the town of Saint André with sixteen villages, from going farther, and was the cause of its stopping at Myans.—(Triple Cour., n. 114.)

10. Our Lady of Laval, in Vivarais. This church is much visited, for obtaining rain for the preservation of the produce of the earth.—(Triple Cour., n. 41.)

11. It is related that on this day a blind man recovered his sight in the Church of Our Lady of Montserrat, in the year 1538.—(Balingh. in Calend.)

12. Our Lady of Charity, in the Abbey of Feuillants, seven leagues from Toulouse. It is said that this image has several times shed tears.—(Triple Cour., n. 34.)

13. Apparition of Our Lady to the blessed Jane of Mantua.—(In ejus vita.)

14. Apparition of Our Lady to St. Ludwina, in the year 1433.—(Joan. Bruchman.)

15. In the year 1011, the Blessed Virgin gave the white habit to the blessed Alberic, instead of the black which he wore.—(In ejus vita.)

16. Our Lady of Victories, in the Church of St. Mark, at Venice. This is the famous image which the Emperors John Zimisces and John Comnenus caused to be carried in a triumphal car; at this day, it is borne in procession at Venice to obtain rain or fine weather.—(In ejus vita.)

17. Our Lady of Arabida, in Portugal, where an image is seen which an English merchant used to carry about him. Finding himself one day in danger of shipwreck, he saw his image, surrounded with a great light, on top of the rock of Arabida, which caused him to build there a little hermitage, where he spent the remainder of his days.—(Triple Cour., n. 16.)

18. Grant of plenary indulgences, by Urban VI., to those who visit the Church of Our Lady of Loretto.—(Balingh. in Calend.)

19. Confirmation of the Feast of the Conception of Our Lady, by the Council of Trent, in the year 1545.—(Concil. Trident.)

20. Our Lady of Scheir, in Bavaria. This church was built on the spot where the castle stood, which those of the house of Scheir voluntarily ceded to Our Lady, except Arnaud, who, in punishment of his obstinacy, was drowned in a neighbouring lake.—(Herith. de orig. gentis et princ. Bav.)

21. Institution of the Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception, at Toledo, in the year 1506, by Cardinal Francis Ximenes, archbishop of that city.—(Gomesius, in ejus vita.)

22. Our Lady of Betharam, in the diocese of Lescar, in the province of Bearn. This image was found, in the year 1503, by some shepherds, who, seeing an extraordinary light on the spot where the high altar of the chapel now stands, came up to it, and found there an image of Our Lady, for which they had a chapel built immediately.—(Triple Cour., n. 32.)

23. Grant of indulgences, by Pope Calixtus II., in the year 1455, to those who shall visit the cathedral of Arras, where a veil and girdle of Our Lady are preserved.—(Andreas Herby, ex codice MS. Eccles. Atreb.)

24. Dedication of Our Lady of Reparation, at Florence, by Eugenius IV., in the year 1436.—(Balingh.)

25. Dedication of the Lower Holy Chapel of Paris, in honour of Our Lady, by Philip, Archbishop of Bourges, in the year 1248.—(Du Breuil, Theatre des Antiq.)

26. Our Lady of Naïera, in Navarre. This image was found miraculously in the year 1048; Dom Garcias de Naïera, King of Navarre, caused a church to be built for it, which several kings of Navarre visited.—(André Favin, liv. iii. Hist. de Navarre.)

27. It is said that in the year 1419, Our Lady de Haut, in Hainault, restored a child to life who had been dead three days.—(Just. Lips. in Hist. D. Virg. Hallens, c. 19.)

28. Our Lady of the Oak, near the town of Sablé, in Anjou. This image has wrought so many miracles, that it is at present very famous in the country; Marshal de Bois, dauphin, had a fine church built for it, and a house of reception for the pilgrims.—(Triple Cour., n. 50.)

29. Our Lady of Faith, at the Augustinian convent of Amiens. This image remained a long time in the cabinet of a young lady, who made a present of it to the church of the Augustinians, where it has wrought many miracles.—(Ex MS. Aug. Ambier.)

30. Our Lady of Nantes, in Britanny. This church, which had been dedicated to the apostles Peter and Paul by Felix, Bishop of Nantes, was pulled down by the Normans, in the year 937, and rebuilt by Alain, Duke of Britanny.—(Fortunat., lib. iii.; Carm., c. 1, 2, 3, and 4.)

MAY.

1. In the year 1449, some of the principal goldsmiths of Paris began to give the May-pole to the Church of Our Lady.—(Du Breuil, Antiq. de Paris, liv. i.)

2. Our Lady of Oviedo, in Spain, where they possess some of the Blessed Virgin's hair.—(Balingh. in Calend.)

3. Apparition of Our Lady to the blessed Mary Razzi, of the order of St. Dominic, in the year 1597.—(Balingh. in Calend.)

4. Our Lady the Helper, three leagues from Caen, in Normandy. Every year a solemn procession is made to this chapel.—(Triple Cour., n. 51.)

5. Our Lady assists, on the Mount of Olives, at the Ascension of Our Lord, and returns afterwards to Jerusalem, to retire into the supper-room with the apostles.—(Act. Apost. i.)

6. Our Lady of Miracles, in the Church of Our Lady of Peace, at Rome. It is related that in the year 1483, a man who had lost his money by gaming,

after blaspheming at this picture, gave it four stabs with a dagger, and that it bled so copiously that the miracle was at once divulged all over the city. This picture is still preserved in the Church of Our Lady of Peace, where it is to be seen at the high altar, framed in marble.—(Gabr. Pen., in hist. Tripl. Canon. Regul., lib. iii. c. 33, § 2.)

7. Our Lady of Haut in Hainault, where is seen one of the three little statues of the Blessed Virgin which St. Elizabeth, daughter of Andrew II., King of Hungary, had religiously honoured, and which she left by will to her holy daughter Sophia, who gave it to the church of Haut, in the year 1267, where several miracles have been since wrought.—(Just. Lipsius, hist. D. Virg. Hallens., c. 3.)

8. In the year 1202, the learned Justus Lipsius gave his silver pen to the Church of Our Lady of Haut, in Hainault, where it is still seen hanging before the high altar.—(In ejus vita.)

9. Our Lady of Loretto, in the March of Ancona, in Italy. This chapel is the house of Nazareth, where the mystery of the Redemption was announced.—(Turselin, in Hist. Lauretana, lib. i., c. 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10.)

10. Dedication of the city of Constantinople to Our Lady, by Constantine the Great, under the patriarch Alexander.—(Niceph., lib. viii., c. 26.) Our Lady of Saussaie, near Paris. The church of this Benedictine priory was dedicated to Our Lady, in the year 1305, by Pope Clement V.

11. Apparition of Our Lady to St. Philip Neri, whom she healed of a serious malady, in the year 1594.—(In ejus vita.)

12. Our Lady of Power, at Aubervillers, near Paris. This image has wrought so many miracles in this church, that it is called Our Lady of Power, though it is dedicated to St. Christopher.—(Du Breuil, lib. iv.)

13. Dedication of Our Lady of Martyrs, called the Rotunda, at Rome, by Boniface IV., in the year 608. This temple was called the Pantheon, because it was dedicated to all the gods of paganism.—(Beda, lib. ii., Hist. Angl., c. 4.)

14. Dedication of Our Lady of Noyon, by Hardouin, thirty-seventh bishop of the same city, in the year 998.—(Chronic. Annoniæ, t. iii.)

15. Descent of the Holy Ghost upon Our Lady and the apostles, in the year 34 of Jesus Christ, and the forty-eighth of the age of the Virgin.—(Christoph. a Castro in Hist. Virginis.)

16. Apparition of Our Lady to St. Catherine of Alexandria, whose body was discovered on the 13th of this month, on Mount Sinai, in consequence of a revelation which the Queen of heaven gave of it.—(In ejus vita.)

17. Our Lady of Tears, in the duchy of Spoletto, in Italy. It is said that this picture, painted on a wall, shed many tears in the year 1494.—(Gabriel Pennotus, lib. iii., Hist. Tripartitæ, c. 34.)

18. Dedication of Our Lady of Bonport, of the Cistercian order, near the Pont

de l'Arche, in the diocess of Evreux. This abbey was founded by Richard Cœur de Lion, on the 11th of March, in the year 1190.—(Gallia Christ., t. iv.)

19. Dedication of Our Lady of Flines, near Douay, by Peter, Archbishop of Rheims, in the year 1279. This abbey of nuns, of the order of Citeaux, was given to St. Bernard by Margaret de Dampierre, in the year 1234.—(Chronic. Fliniens.)

20. Dedication of the church of La Ferté, in the diocese of Chalons, in Burgundy, in honour of Our Lady. This abbey, the eldest daughter of Citeaux, was founded in the year 1113, by Savaric and William, Counts of Chalons.—(Ex Archiviis Abbat. Firmitatis.)

21. Our Lady of Sweat, at Salerno, in Italy. It is said that this Madonna sweated blood and water in the year 1611, as a presage of a great conflagration which happened on the following day.—(P. Spinelli Tract. de exempl. et miracul., cap. ultim.)

22. Our Lady of Monte Vergine, near Naples. This image preserved from the flames the monastery and church consecrated in her honour.—(Idem, loco citato.)

23. Our Lady of Miracles, at St. Omer's, where a glove and some portion of the hair of the Blessed Virgin are preserved.—(Chronic. Bertinens.)

24. Gregory XV., in the year 1622, makes a decree, by which it is forbidden to uphold the contrary opinion to the Immaculate Conception. It is also forbidden, by the same decree, to use in the mass or office any other term than that of conception.—(Balingh. in Calend.)

25. Our Lady the New, at Jerusalem, built by the Emperor Justinian, in the year 530.—(Procopius, de Œdific. imperat. Justiniani.)

26. Dedication of Our Lady of Vaucelles, in the diocese of Cambray, by Samson, Archbishop of Rheims. This abbey, of the order of Citeaux, was founded in the year 1132.—(In Chronic. Cisterc.)

27. Dedication of Our Lady of Naples, called St. Mary Major, by Pope John II., in the year 533. A picture of the Blessed Virgin, painted by St. Luke, has been carefully preserved in this church.—(Schraderous, lib. ii.)

28. Feast of relics of Our Lady, at Venice, where are exposed to the veneration of the faithful, portions of the robe of the Blessed Virgin, of her mantle, veil, and girdle. (Ex Hist. ca de re Impressa Venetiis.)

29. Feast of Our Lady des Ardents, at Arras; a wax candle is kept in the cathedral of Arras, which is held to have been brought thither by Our Lady, in the year 1095.—(Jacob. Meyerus, in Annal. Fland., ad ann. 1095.)

30. Dedication of the church of Monte Vergine, near Naples, built in the year 1126, by St. William, founder of the order of Monte Vergine, and repaired in the year 1519.—(John Juvenal, lib. vii., de Antiq., c. 3.)

31. Our Lady of Suffering, in the Church of St. Gervase, at Paris. This image, which was at the corner of the street *des Rosiers*, was mutilated by a

Jew, in the year 1528; Francis I. had it solemnly carried to St. Gervase, and he ordered a statue to be made of silver gilt, which he himself set up in the place of the first. This statue was stolen in the year 1545, and another of stone was substituted for it, which always retained the name of Our Lady of Silver.—(Du Breuil, Theatre des Antiquities, lib. iii.)

JUNE.

1. Our Lady of the Star, at Aquileia, in Italy. This church is so called, because it is affirmed that a star was seen, in open day on the head of St. Bernardin, when, preaching at Aquileia, he applied to the Blessed Virgin that passage of the Apocalypse, where it is said that there were twelve stars on her head.—(Surius, in ejus vita.)

2. Our Lady of Edessa, in Asia Minor. It is asserted that this image, placed beneath the gateway of a church, spoke to St. Alexis, and made known to the people the merit of that saint. Thence it was removed to Rome, where it is highly honoured.—(Thomas Bosius, lib. ix. c. 9.)

3. Our Lady of Sosopoli, in Pisidia. There exuded from this image a miraculous oil, as is testified by Germanus, patriarch of Constantinople, in a letter which was read at the second council of Nice, assembled for the defence of holy images.—(Art. 4, Concil. Nicæni.)

4. Our Lady of the Hill, at Fribourg, where many miracles are wrought.—(Triple Cour., n. 85.)

5. The chronicle relates that in the year 1428, Our Lady of Haut, in Hainault, restored a child to life, who had been dead several days, that he might receive baptism; that he lived five hours after receiving that sacrament, and then melted away by degrees, like a snow-ball, in presence of seventy persons.—(Justus Lipsius, de Virg. Hallens., c. 21.)

6. Institution of the nuns of the Visitation of Our Lady, founded at Annecy, in Savoy, in the year 1610, by St. Francis of Sales, Bishop of Geneva, and Jane Frances Fremiot de Chantal, who was the first religious.—(Henri de Maupas du Tour, 2e partie, ch. i.)

7. Dedication of Our Lady du Val, of the Order of Citeaux, seven leagues from Paris, under Louis XIII., on the 18th of April, in the year 1616.—(Ex codice MS.)

8. Our Lady of Alexandria, in Egypt, built by St. Peter, patriarch of this city.—(Baronius, ad ann. 310.)

9. Our Lady of Ligny, near Bar le Duc, in Lorraine. This image is very famous for the frequent miracles which are wrought there.—(Triple Cour., n. 57.)

10. Our Lady of Cranganor, in the East Indies. It is asserted that this church was built by one of the three Magi.—(Osorius, t. i. de Gestis Emmam.)

11. Our Lady of Esquernes, half a league from Lille, in Flanders. This image began to work miracles about the year 1162.—(Buzelinus, in Annal. Gall., lib. ii.)

12. The chronicle records that on this day Our Lady appeared to St. Herman, of the Premonstratensian order, and gave him a lock of her hair.—(Surius, in ejus vita.)

13. Dedication of Our Lady of Sichem, near Louvain, in the year 1604, by Mathias Hovius, Archbishop of Mechlin. The image of the Blessed Virgin seen in this church, was originally placed in the hollow of an oak tree.—(Just. Lipsius, de Virg. Aspricol., c. 4.)

14. In the year 371, there fell from heaven, at Arras, something like white wool mixed with heavy rain, of which mention is made by St. Jerom, and it is maintained that the famine being great in the country, the inhabitants of Arras had recourse to the Blessed Virgin, who sent them this heavenly present, commonly called manna, some remains of which are still to be seen in the church dedicated in her honour.—(Ex Arch. Abb. Truliense.)

15. Foundation of Our Lady of the *Feuillants*, in the diocese of Toulouse and Rieux, in the year 1145.

16. Our Lady of Aix la Chapelle, built by Charlemagne, and consecrated by Leo III., in the year 804, where there were assembled three hundred and fifty prelates. Charlemagne gave to this church two tunics of Our Lady, in the year 810, from which Charles the Bald took one, sixty-five years afterwards, to give it to the church of Chartres.—(Ferreol. Locrius, lib. v. Mariæ Aug., c. 17.)

17. Our Lady of the Forest, near Boulogne-sur-Mer. This little chapel is very celebrated in that country.—(Triple Cour., n. 53.)

18. Apparition of Our Lady to St. Agnes of Monte Pulciano, with whom, it is said, she left a small cross, which is still shown with great solemnity, on the 1st of May.—(Chronic. S. Dominici, part i. lib. i. c. 72.)

19. At Treves, in Germany, is seen in the church of St. John the Evangelist, built in 333, the comb of Our Lady, given by Agritius, archbishop of that city.

20. Our Lady of Blaquernes, on the port of Constantinople, where they possess the winding-sheet of Our Lady, given by the Empress St. Pulcheria, who had received it from Juvenal, Bishop of Jerusalem.—(Niceph. lib. xv., c. 14.)

21. Our Lady of Matarieh, at Grand Cairo, in Egypt, where is seen a miraculous fountain, which Our Lady obtained by her prayers, when she fled thither with the Holy Family; and it is held, by tradition, that there she washed the swaddling clothes of the Infant Jesus.—(Triple Cour., n. 5.)

22. Our Lady of Narni, in Italy. It is said that this image spoke to the blessed Lucy, to whom she gave the little Jesus to hold.—(Triple Cour., Trait. 3.)

23. Our Lady *Justinienne*, at Carthage. This church was built by the

Emperor Justinian, in honour of the Blessed Virgin, to whom he attributed the victories which he gained over the Vandals.—(Baron. ad ann. 534.)

24. Our Lady of Clos Evrard, near Treves. This image was fastened to an oak by a vinedresser, who wished to honour it; but Our Lady ordered him to build a small hut in her honour. The miracles which were wrought there caused this hut first to be exchanged for a little chapel, and at last for a church, which was dedicated in the year 1449, by James de Rircq, Archbishop of Treves. —(Triple Cour., n. 82.)

25. In the year 431, the council of Ephesus, which declared that the Blessed Virgin must be called Mother of God.—(Concil. Ephes.)

26. Our Lady of Meliapoor, in the East Indies, where St. Francis Xavier often retired to say his prayers.—(In vita S. Franc. Xaverii.)

27. Our Lady of the *Dorade*, at Toulouse. This place, which was formerly dedicated to the goddess Pallas, was changed into a church of Our Lady, when the inhabitants received the faith.—(Foreat., lib. i., de Gall. Imperio.)

28. Dedication of the church of the Carthusians of Paris, under the title of Our Lady, by John d'Aubigny, Bishop of Troyes, in Champagne, in the year 1325.—(Du Breuil, Theatre des Antiquit., lib. ii.)

29. Our Lady of Buglose, two leagues from Acqs, in Gascony. This image was miraculously found in the year 1634, and removed to the parish of Buglose. —(Triple Cour., n. 36.)

30. Our Lady of Calais, built by the English, while they possessed that city, of which they were masters during two hundred and ten years; a magnificent chapel was added to it, in the year 1631, by James de Bolloye, *curé* of Calais.—(Davila, t. ii.)

JULY.

1. Dedication of the church of Jumieges, in Normandy, in the year 1067, by Maurice, Archbishop of Rouen, at the instance of King William.—(Thomas Walsingham.)

2. The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin. This feast was instituted by Urban IV., in the year 1385, and confirmed by Boniface IX., in the year 1389.—(S. Antonin, iv. part, tit. xv., chap. 24.)

3 Our Lady of *la Carolle*, at Paris. It is said that this image, which was placed at the corner of the Rue aux Ours, was stabbed with a knife, in the year 1418, and that it bled profusely. In memory of this, an artificial firework is made every year, in which a waxen figure is burnt, which represents the sacrilegious wretch who gave the blow.—(Du Breuil, lib. ii.)

4. Our Lady of Miracles, at Avignon, built by Pope John XXII., on the occasion of two criminals being condemned to the fire; one was seen to be spared

by the flames, who had invoked the Blessed Virgin, while the other was entirely consumed.—(Richard Cluniac. in Joan. xxii.)

5. Dedication of Our Lady of Cambray, in the year 1472, by Peter de Ranchicourt, Bishop of Arras. This church was built in honour of Our Lady, in the year 524; reduced to ruins by the Normans in the year 882; rebuilt by Dossilon, twenty-first Bishop of Arras, in the year 890; and, finally, after having been burnt in the years 1064 and 1148, it was put in the condition in which it now is, in the year 1251.—(Chronic. Hannon., t. iii., lib. ii., chap. 23.)

6. Our Lady d' Iron, near Blois, in Dunois. It was in this chapel that, about the year 1631, a child, who had been smothered by struggling in its cradle, came to life the moment that its parents had devoted it to our Lady d'Iron.—(Ex Archiv. hujus loci.)

7. Dedication of Our Lady of Arras, in the year 1484, by Peter de Ranchicourt, bishop of that city. This church was built by St. Vaast, Bishop of Arras, in the year 542, according to Baronius, by the liberal donations of the first kings of France. The Normans destroyed it in the year 583, and, after being rebuilt, it was burnt by lightning in the year 1030, and built again in the year 1040.—(Locrius, lib. ii.)

It is related that, in the year 1410, Our Lady of Haut, in Hainault, restored life to a child of Brussels who had been drowned in a well. This child, having been taken out of the well dead, was devoted to Our Lady, and he immediately came to life.—(Justus Lipsius, de Virg. Hallens., c. 16.)

8. Our Lady of Peace, at the Capuchin Convent in the Rue St. Honoré, at Paris.

9. Dedication of Our Lady of Coutances, by Geoffry de Mombray, in 1056.

10. Dedication of Our Lady of Boulogne, near Paris, in the year 1469, by Chartier, Bishop of Paris. The confraternity of Our Lady of Boulogne is so celebrated, that six of our kings have chosen to belong to it.—(Du Breuil, Antiq., lib. iv.)

11. Our Lady of Clery, four leagues from Orleans. This church was rebuilt by King Louis XI., who was buried there in the year 1483.—(Locrius, M. Aug. lib. iv. c. 68.)

12. Dedication of Our Lady of all Graces, at the convent of the Minims of Nigeon, near Paris, in the year 1578. This house was given in the year 1476, by Ann of Britanny, wife of Louis XII., to St. Francis of Paula, who had instituted his order in the year 1436.—(Du Breuil, Ant. de Paris.)

13. A century before the birth of our Saviour, the image of Our Lady of Chartres was carved in a forest, in the midst of the plains of La Beauce, by order of Priscus, king of the people of Chartres, and was set up afterwards with this inscription, "Virgini parituræ"—that is, *To a Virgin who is to bring forth*—in the same place where it is seen at the present day, which was then a cave, where the Druids offered their sacrifices. St. Potentianus, second Bishop of Sens, whom

the Apostle St. Peter had sent into France, stopped at Chartres, where he blessed this image, and dedicated the cavern as a church, in the year of Jesus Christ 46.—(Sebast. Rouillard, Parthen; c. iv. n. 1.)

14. Our Lady of the Bush, in Portugal. This image was seen in the middle of a burning bush, by a shepherd; Vasquez Perdigon, Bishop of Evora, caused to be built in this place, in the year 1403, a church and monastery, which was given to the monks of St. Jerom.—(Vasconcell., in Descript. regni Lusitaniæ, c. vii. § 5.)

15. In the year 1099, the Turks were defeated by Godfrey of Bouillon, who on this day took Jerusalem, of which he was made king; and formerly the feast of this event was celebrated annually with a double office and octave.—(Molanus, ad hanc diem.)

16. The feast of the Scapular; tradition says that Our Lady gave it, herself, about the year 1251, to the blessed Simon Stock, an Englishman; this devotion has since spread all over the world. The popes John XXII., Gregory XIII., Sixtus V., Gregory XIV., and Clement VIII., have granted indulgences to those who are of this confraternity.—(Cartagena, de Ortu ordinis Carmelitarum.)

17. In the year 1565, Pius V. approves of the reform of the barefooted Carmelites, instituted by St. Teresa, at Avila, in Spain.

18. Our Lady of Victory, at Toledo, so called from a signal victory which was gained over the Moors, by Alphonsus IX., King of Castile, in the year 1202, after having a flag carried, on which was the picture of Our Lady.—(In Hist. Alphonsi ad Innocent III.)

19. Our Lady of Moyen Pont, near Peronne. This image was found by a shepherd, near the ponds, where the meadows of Amele are at present; a church was built there, which was repaired in 1612.—(Triple Cour., n. 53.)

20. Our Lady of Grace, at Picpus, Faubourg Saint-Antoine, of Paris. This image, which is in a small ship of wood with two angels at the end, was made, in 1629, from a splinter taken from the famous image of Our Lady of Boulogne-sur-Mer.—(Triple Cour., n. 47.)

21. Our Lady of Verdun, in Lorraine, celebrated for numerous miracles. St. Polichraine, fifth Bishop of Verdun, dedicated this church on his return from the council of Chalcedon.—(Ex Arch. eccles. Virod.)

22. Our Lady *de la Garde*, near Marseilles. The Queen of heaven is much honoured in this church, where every Saturday the blessed sacrament is exposed from midnight till noon. There are seen more than thirty large silver lamps, with a quantity of branches of coral, of extraordinary size.—(Ex Chronic. Massiliens.)

23. Institution of the order of Premontré, by St. Norbert, in the year 1120, after a revelation from Our Lady.—(Biblioth. Præmonstr., lib. i. c. 2.)

24. Foundation of Our Lady of Cambron, near Mons, in Hainault, by Anselm de Trasigny, lord of Peronne.—(In MS. in the year 1148; Hannon. chronic.)

25. Our Lady of Bouchet, two leagues and a half from Blane, in Berry, a

pilgrimage which attracts a great concourse of pilgrims. The image of the Blessed Virgin is made of the wood of an aged oak, where the first image was found.—(Ex monumentis hujus loci.)

26. Our Lady of Faith, at Cauchy, near Abbeville. This image, having been removed from the oak where it is, into a chapel which was built for it, fifty yards off, was miraculously found again in its former place.—(Des Archives de Cauchy.)

27. In the year 1480, the knights of Rhodes gained a signal victory over the Turks, by the help of the Blessed Virgin, who appeared on the walls of that city holding a lance in her hand; the enemy, affrighted, retired in disorder, and lost the greater part of their army.—(Jacob. Bosius, in Hist. equitum Rhod.)

28. Our Lady of Faith, at Gravelines. This image is very celebrated in the country.—(Hist. Dominæ Foyens. Gravel.)

29. In the year 1546, it was decreed at the council of Trent that, respecting the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, the constitution of Sixtus IV. should be strictly observed, under the penalties therein imposed.—(Balingh. in Calend.)

30. Our Lady de Gray, near Besançon, in Franche Comté. This image, made of the oak of Montaigu, was much honoured in the country.—(Triple Cour., n. 58.)

31. Our Lady of the Murdered, at Ceïca, near Lorban, a Cistercian monastery in Portugal. It is said that this image was brought from heaven to the Abbot John, uncle of King Alphonsus, and that it restored to life several persons who had been murdered; that in memory of this miracle they had from that time a red mark on their throats, like that which is seen at present on the throat of the image.—(Chronic Cisterc., lib. vi., c. 27 and 28.)

AUGUST.

1. In the year 1218, Our Lady, appearing on this day to St. Raimund, of the order of St. Dominic, to James, King of Arragon, and to St. Peter Nolasco, made known to all three separately that she desired them to establish an order for redeeming captives.—(Surius, in vita S. Raymundi.)

2. Our Lady of Angels, or of the Portiuncula, six hundred yards from the city of Assissium, in Italy. The Benedictine monks gave this chapel to St. Francis, at his request; and he wished the convent which he built there to be the principal one of his order. He there assembled the first General Chapter, where there were five thousand religious, and where he yielded up the ghost, in the year 1226, the twentieth of his conversion, and the forty-fifth of his age.—(Chr. Ord. part i., lib. ii. c. 1.)

3. Our Lady of Bows, in London. It is related that this image, having been carried away by a storm, together with more than six hundred houses, in the year 1071, it fell uninjured with such violence, that it broke into the pavement, and sunk more than twenty feet into the earth, whence it was never possible to draw it out.—(Willel. Malmesbury, lib. iv., in Willel., 2.)

4. Our Lady of Dordrecht, in Holland, built by St. Santera on the spot which an angel, as it is said, who was sent by the Blessed Virgin, marked out; she received, afterwards, the crown of martyrdom in this church. To render her memory more celebrated, God caused a fountain to flow, after her death, which cured fevers.—(Molan. in SS. Belg.)

5. Dedication of Our Lady *ad Nives*, called St. Mary Major, and formerly of the Crib, at Rome, because our Saviour's crib is kept there. It was built by a patrician named John, and his wife, on the very place, which they found covered with snow, on the 5th of August, in the year 367, and rebuilt by Sixtus II., about the year 432.—(Baron. in Nat. ad ann. 367.)

Dedication of the Church of Our Lady of the Angels, at Rome, by Pope Pius IV., in the year 1561. This church, which anciently formed part of the *thermæ,* or baths of Dioclesian, was erected as a titular church of a cardinal, favoured with many indulgences, and given by the same pope to the Carthusians. —(Balingh. in Calend.)

Our Lady of Protection, in the church of the Feuillants, in the Rue St. Honoré, at Paris. It was so named by Queen Ann of Austria, in the year 1561, in thanksgiving for the favours which she had received from the Queen of heaven. —(Du Breuil, Antiq., lib. iii.)

6. In the year 963, the church of Our Lady of Chartres was entirely burnt, except the tunic of the Blessed Virgin, which is seen there to this day.—(Sebast. Rouillard, Parthen., c. vii.)

7. Our Lady of Schiedam, in Holland. The chronicle relates that a merchant, who had stolen this image, having embarked with the intention of selling it at the fair at Antwerp, could never get away from the port. Alarmed at this prodigy, he restored the image which he had taken away, and it was solemnly translated to the church of St. John Baptist, where St. Ludwina used to pass whole nights in prayer.—(Joan. Bruchman., Minorita.)

8. Our Lady of La Kuen, near Brussels. This church was built by order of Our Lady, who is said to have marked out its dimensions with a line which is still shown.—(Auctar. ad Molan.)

9. Our Lady of Œgnies, in Brabant, the birthplace of Mary of Œgnies, who visited this holy image once every year, barefoot, during the severe rigours of winter.—(Jacob. de Vitriaco, in ejus vita.)

10. Institution of the order of Our Lady of Mercy, at Barcelona, in the year 1218.—(Surius in vita Sancti Raimundi.)

11. In the year 810, the Emperor Nicephorus and the Empress Irene sent to

Charlemagne two of the Blessed Virgin's robes; he deposited them in his church at Aix-la-Chapelle, from which Charles the Bald took one, which he presented to the Cathedral of Chartres.—(Locrius Anaceph., p. 3.)

12. Our Lady of Rouen, which Robert, Duke of Normandy, built. Richard I., King of England, gave great gifts to this church, and the kings of France have granted it great privileges.—(Merula Cosmogr., part ii., lib. iii. c. 30.)

13. Death of Our Lady in presence of the apostles, except St. Thomas. Like her divine Son, she rose again and ascended to heaven on the third day after her death.—(Suarez., t. ii.; in p. Disp. 21, sect. in fine.)

14. Vigil of the Assumption of Our Lady, with fasting, of which mention is made by Nicolas I., who was pope in the year 858. It is recorded that on this day angels were heard, near the city of Soissons, singing this anthem: "Felix namque es, sacra Virgo Maria, et omni laude dignissima, quia ex te ortus est Sol justitiæ, Christus Deus noster."—(Thom. Concep., lib. ii. part 7.)

15. The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin. This feast was instituted, according to St. Bernard, in the very time of the apostles.—(S. Bernard, Ep. 174.)

16. On this day the sepulchre of Our Lady was opened, and in proof that the Blessed Virgin was already assumed into heaven, nothing was found but her winding-sheet, which gave a delicious scent.—(Sausseyus, in Martyrolog. Gallic., die Assumpt.)

17. Philip the Fair gained on this day a signal victory over the Flemish, in the year 1304, after recommending himself to Our Lady of Chartres. Out of gratitude for this favour, he gave to it in perpetuity the land and lordship of Barrus, founded a daily mass for ever, and left to this church all the accoutrements which he wore on that day of victory. This feast is kept in the Church of Notre Dame, at Paris, on the following day, the 18th, and the office is double.—(Sebastien Rouillard, c. 6.)

18. In the year 1022, King Robert founded a chapel in honour of Our Lady in the court of the palace, at Paris, on the spot where the Sainte Chapelle now stands.—(Du Breuil, Antiq. de Paris.)

19. Our Lady of Jerusalem, near Montecorvo, in Portugal. A chapel is there seen built in imitation of the one at Jerusalem; it is said that the Blessed Virgin herself gave the plan.—(Vasconcell., in Descript. regni Lusit.)

20. In the celebrated church of the Benedictines of Affighem, in Brabant, is seen an image of the Blessed Virgin, of which it has been received by tradition that St. Bernard, saluting it in these terms, "Salve, Maria," it answered him, "Salve, Bernarde."—(Just. Lipsius, t. ii. c. 4, § 4.)

21. In the year 1022 was instituted the order of the thirty knights of Our Lady of the Star, at Paris, by King Robert, who said that the Blessed Virgin was the Star of his kingdom.—(A. Favin, Hist. de Navarre.)

22. Octave of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, instituted by Pope Leo IV. in the year 847.—(Jacob. Bosius, n. 2.)

23. On this day, in the year 1328, Philip de Valois, being surrounded by Flemings near Mount Cassel, had recourse to the Blessed Virgin, who immediately delivered him from that danger. Out of gratitude for this favour, when he made his entry into Paris, he went straight to Notre Dame, and going into the church on horseback, he proceeded the whole length of the nave up to the crucifix, and there laid down his arms. The picture of this monarch on horseback was for a long time to be seen in that church, to which he gave a revenue of 100 livres, to be levied on his domain of Gatinais.—(Triple Cour., trait. 4, c. 7, n. 7.)

24. Dedication of Our Lady of Benoiste Vaux, nearly a league from Verdun, in Lorraine. This chapel preserves an image of the Blessed Virgin, rendered famous by miracles; in this place is found a miraculous fountain, the water of which cures several maladies.—(Hist. de Notre Dame de Benoiste Vaux, ch. i. and ix.)

25. Our Lady of Rossano, in Calabria. It is said that the Saracens, seeking to surprise the town of Rossano, where they had already planted ladders, were repulsed by Our Lady, who appeared attired in purple, and holding in her hand a lighted torch: this so terrified them, that they took to flight.—(Gabr. de Barry.)

26. Our Lady de la Treille, at Douay. It is related that when some children were playing disrespectfully before this image, it made with the hand a sign of disapproval. This miracle induced the inhabitants of Douay to build a chapel for it, in the year 1543.—(Buzelin, in Annal. Gallo-Flandr.)

27. Our Lady of Moustier, eight or ten leagues from Sisteron, in the direction of Marseilles. An ancient tradition records that a lord of the country being made prisoner by the Turks, made a vow to have a chapel built in honour of the Blessed Virgin, if she were pleased to deliver him. The Blessed Virgin heard his prayer; an angel took him on his wings, and carried him back to his country. The nobleman had a magnificent chapel built to the Blessed Virgin, where numerous miracles are wrought.—(Ex MS. ea de re conscript.)

28. Our Lady of Kiow, the metropolitan church of Russia, in Poland, where there is a large image in alabaster, which spoke to St. Hyacinth, in the year 1241, and told him not to abandon it to the enemy who was besieging the city, but to carry it off with him, which he did without any difficulty, the image having lost its weight.—(In vita Sancti Hyacinth.)

29. Our Lady of Clermont, ten leagues from Cracow, where there is a picture painted by St. Luke, and sent to the Empress St. Pulcheria; that princess placed it in the Church of Our Lady of the Guides, at Constantinople, from which it was taken by Leo, Duke of Russia; the Duke of Opolia wanted to remove it to his duchy, in the year 1380; but when he had got to the mountain of Clermont, it became so heavy that it was impossible to carry it farther; and seeing by this miracle that the Blessed Virgin had chosen that mountain for her abode, they built a church there.—(Bzovius, ad ann. 1383.)

30. Our Lady of Carquere, on the river Douro, in Portugal. Egas de Monis, governor of King Alphonsus I., had this young prince carried into this ancient church of the Blessed Virgin, to procure that his legs might be straightened through her intercession; which perfectly succeeded.—(Vasconcell., in Regib. Lusit. Anacephal. 1 and 2.)

31. Dedication of Our Lady of the Founders, at Constantinople. The Empress St. Pulcheria had this church built, and gave to it the girdle of Our Lady. A feast of this relic is kept at Constantinople, under the title of the Deposition of Our Lady's girdle. The French having taken this city, this precious treasure was carried off by Nivellon, Bishop of Soissons, and placed in the celebrated abbey of Our Lady, with a portion of the veil of that Queen of heaven.—(Niceph., lib. iv. c. 8.)

SEPTEMBER.

1. On the first Sunday of this month, in St. Peter's church, at Louvain, a feast is kept in honour of the Blessed Virgin, called the Collection of all the Feasts of Our Lady.—(Molanus, ad Usuard. Martyrolog.)

2. Our Lady of Helbron, or of Nettles, in Franconia, in Germany. This image began to work miracles in the year 1441.—(Triple Cour., n. 73.)

3. Dedication of the Abbey of Corneville, in honour of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, in the year 1147, by Hugo, Archbishop of Rouen.—(Gall. Christiana, t. iv.)

4. In the year 1419, Our Lady of Haut, in Hainault, restored to life a young woman named Jane Maillard, who was drawing water from a very deep well, when, the stonework at the top giving way, she fell to the bottom, and was taken out quite dead; but her mother having offered her by vow to Our Lady of Haut, she immediately showed signs of life.—(Just. Lipsius, de Virgin. Hallens., c. 19.)

5. Our Lady of Bois, near Arras. A horse-soldier, who would have made a stable of this chapel, in the year 1478, was killed on the spot by his horse.—(Triple Cour., n. 62.)

6. Our Lady of the Fountain, half a league from Valenciennes. Tradition relates that the Blessed Virgin appeared in this place to a hermit, when the plague ravaged the town, and commanded him to tell the inhabitants to fast on the following day, and pass the night in prayer. Having done this, they saw her descend from heaven, and gird the town all round with a cord. This cord is still preserved at Valenciennes.—(Ex libello de ea re scripto.)

7. Vigil of the Nativity of Our Lady, instituted by Gregory II., about the year 722.—(Balingh. in Calend.)

8. The Nativity of Our Lady, which happened, according to Baronius, in the

year of the creation of the world 4007, on a Saturday, at daybreak, fifteen years before the birth of our Saviour. This feast was instituted on the 8th of September, in the Greek Church and in the Latin, in the year 436, according to the same Baronius; and, in France, by St. Maurillus, Bishop of Angers.

Dedication of the church of Our Lady of Liesse, in the diocese of Laon, ten leagues from Rheims. Dedication of Our Lady of Montserrat, in Catalonia.

9. Our Lady of Puy, in Velay. St. George, who was its first bishop, had marked out the site of this church, which was not built till about the year 221. The Blessed Virgin, herself, gave the charge of it to St. Evodius, or Vosi, the seventh bishop of the same place, whom she ordered to transfer his episcopal see to Puy. St. Evodius obeyed the Blessed Virgin; but, when he wished to consecrate his new church, it was made known to him that the dedication of it had been performed by angels; the doors opened of themselves, the bells rung of themselves, the candles were found lighted, and the holy Chrism, which the angels had used, appeared quite fresh upon the altar and the walls.—(Odo Gisseus, de Virg. Aniciens., lib. ii., c. 7, 8, and 9.)

10. Our Lady of Trut, near Cologne. This church was built, under Otho I., by St. Heribert, Archbishop of Cologne, on the very spot where idols had been formerly worshipped.

11. Our Lady of Hildesheim, in the duchy of Brunswick, in Germany. An image is there venerated, which Louis the Meek always wore about him. One day, when he had forgotten it in a wood, it became so heavy that it was impossible to remove it, which made the king resolve to build a church there.—(Triple Cour., n. 75.)

12. Our Lady of Healing, in Lower Normandy. Miraculous cures are wrought, in great numbers, in this church.—(Ex Archiv. hujus Eccl.)

13. Our Lady of Guadalupa, in Spain. This image, which Pope Gregory sent to St. Leander, Bishop of Seville, was concealed, on the invasion of the Moors, with the body of St. Fulgentius, in the cave of Guadalupa, where it remained nearly six hundred years, till Our Lady revealed it to a shepherd.—(Joann. Mariana, lib. vi., de Reb. Hispan.)

14. Dedication of Our Lady of Fontevrault, in Poitou, by Pope Calixtus II., in the year 1129.—(Gall. Christiana.)

15. Octave of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, instituted on occasion of some disputes, which arose on the election of a successor to Celestin IV., by the intrigues of the Emperor Frederick II., which caused the cardinals to have recourse to Our Lady, obliging themselves, by vow, to add an octave to her Nativity, when she should have given them a pope. Innocent IV. having been elected, he instituted this octave in the year 1243, the first of his pontificate.—(Arnoldus Wionius, lib. v., Ligni vitæ, c. 22.)

16. Our Lady of Good Tidings, at Orleans, built by King Robert, in the year

996, on the very spot where he learnt the good news that his father, Hugo, had escaped death.—(Locrius, Mariæ Augustæ, lib. iv., c. 62.)

17. The placing of the image of Our Lady of Puy, in Velay. The King St. Louis gave this image to the church of Puy, in the year 1254, on his return from beyond the seas.

18. Our Lady of Smelcem, in Flanders. The chronicle relates that some shepherds observed that their sheep bent their knees before this image. This occasioned Baldwin, surnamed *Fair Beard*, to choose this place to build a church in thanksgiving for having been cured by our Saviour of a malady which he had had for seventeen years.—(Triple Cour., n. 63.)

19. Our Lady of Healing, near Mount Leon, in Gascony.—(Geoffroy, Hist. de la Vièrge de Guerison.)

20. Our Lady of Pied d'Argent, at Toul, in Lorraine, where an image is seen, which, according to an ancient tradition, informed a woman, in the year 1284, of an act of treachery which was planning against the city, and as a sign of it, the image put out its foot, which was found changed into silver.—(Triple Cour., n. 57.)

21. Our Lady of Pucha, in the kingdom of Valentia. This image was found, in the year 1223, by means of seven stars, which were seen shining on this spot, which made people dig into the earth, where they found an image of the Blessed Virgin.—(Bernard. Comes, Hist. Hispan., lib. x.)

22. The giving of the name of Mary to Our Lady, by St. Ann, her mother.—(Petrus a Castro, Hist. Virg., c. 2.)

23. Our Lady of Valvanere, in Spain. This image was found in an oak, on the very spot where is now seen the magnificent church which Alphonsus IV., King of Castile, caused to be rebuilt.—(Anton. Yopez, in Chronic.)

24. Our Lady of Roquemadour, or Rock of Amator, in the diocese of Cahors, in Quercy. This place of pilgrimage is so named because St. Amator, vulgarly called St. Amant, lived for some time upon this rock, which began to be famous about the year 1140.—(Hugo Farcitus, de Miracul. B. Virg. Rupiramat.)

25. Our Lady of Passer, at Rhodes. This image having been often removed from the place where it was to another place, was always found again at its old post, which made it necessary to build a church there.—(Triple Cour., n. 53.)

26. Our Lady of Victory, at Tournay. The inhabitants carried the keys of the city into the church of Our Lady, in the year 1340, because they knew that the Queen of heaven alone was able to deliver them from the English, who had besieged them for forty days; they had no sooner testified this confidence in the Blessed Virgin, than the siege was raised, when the inhabitants had hardly provisions left for three days.—(Ex Archiv. Tornaceus.)

27. Our Lady of Good-meeting, half a league from Agde. This image, made of baked clay, was discovered miraculously, in the year 1523.—(Triple Cour., n. 34.)

28. Our Lady of Cambron, of the order of Citeaux, in Hainault, near Mons. It is said that this image, being struck by a wicked man, in the year 1322, bled copiously.—(Hist. Camberon., edita Duaci. ann. 1602.)

29. Our Lady of Tongres, in the diocese of Cambray. This image, in the year 1081, was taken into a garden, where the Bishop of Cambray had a church built.—(Triple Cour., n. 1602.)

30. Our Lady of Beaumont, in Lorraine, between Domremy and Vaucouleurs. Joan Darc very often retired into this church, to commend the affairs of France to the Queen of heaven and earth, who ordered her to take up arms to deliver that kingdom.—(*La même*, traité 3, ch. 7.)

OCTOBER.

1. Foundation of the Abbey de la Couronne, of the order of St. Augustin, in the diocese of Angoulême, under the title of Our Lady, by Lambert, who was its first abbot, in the year 1122.—(Gallia Christiana, t. iv.)

2. Our Lady of the Assumption, at Naples, built by the canonesses regular of St. Augustin, out of gratitude for the favour which the Mother of God did them, by warning them to leave a house which fell down as soon as they were gone out of it.—(Triple Cour., n. 42.)

3. Our Lady of La Place, at Rome. This image having fallen into a well at the house of Cardinal Capocius, in the year 1250, the water swelled up miraculously, and cast out the image, which the cardinal placed in his chapel. But Pope Innocent IV. obliged him to build another on the very spot where the miracle had occurred. This chapel having been given to the Servites, they have had a fine church built, in which the well is enclosed.—(*La même*, n. 100.)

4. Our Lady of Vaussivieres, on the mountains of Auvergne, near Mont d'Or, where there is an image which has remained miraculously from the ruins of Vaussivieres, which was ravaged by the English about the year 1374. This image having been transferred to the Church of Besse, was found again in its former place.—(Duchene, c. 9.)

5. Our Lady of Buch, in the Pine Mountains, in Guienne. The sea cast this image upon the sands, while St. Thomas, the Cordelier friar, was praying in behalf of two vessels which he saw in danger of perishing. He respectfully received this image and deposited it in this place, in a small chapel which he built there.—(Florimond Raymon, Hist. des Heres., liv. i.)

Saint Mary's of Jersey, consecrated in the year 1320, in the archipelago of La Manche.—(Chartrier de Coutances, called Le Livre Noir.)

6. Our Lady de la Plebe, in the marshes of Venice, built in the year 1480.

7. Feast of the Rosary, instituted by Pope Gregory XIII. in the year 1573,

in consequence of the celebrated victory of Lepanto, gained by the Christians over the Turks.—(Joseph Stephan., Tract. de Indulg. Rosarii.)

8. Our Lady of Gifts, at Avignon. The tradition which attributes the foundation of this church to St. Martha reports that it was consecrated by our Lord himself. Afterwards, having been demolished by the Saracens, it was repaired by the Emperor Charlemagne.—(Triple Cour., n. 40.)

9. In the year 723, in the night following the day when the prince of the Saracens had unjustly ordered the hand of St. John Damascen to be cut off, Our Lady reunited it miraculously to his wrist, after this faithful servant had prayed to her for it with the design of continuing to write in defence of holy images.—(Joan. Patriarch. Jerosolimit., in vita Sancti Joann. Damasc. apud Surium.)

10. Our Lady of the Cloister, at Besançon. The image of Our Lady, placed in the cloister of La Madeleine, was preserved from a fire, in the year 1624, though the niche where it stood was reduced to ashes.—(Triple Cour., n. 58.)

11. Our Lady the White, in the church of the monastery of the Feuillants, at Ouville, in the district of Caux. This image is much venerated in the country.—(Ex Archiv. hujus Monast.)

12. Our Lady of Faith, in the country of Liege. This image was found by a carpenter named Gilles de Waulin, in the year 1609, who, as he was cutting down an oak, with the intention of making a boat, found in it, enclosed in an iron grating, an image of Our Lady, made of white earth, a foot high, which was placed in another oak, and afterwards in a church which was built on the very place of the oak which had borne this fair fruit.—(Triple Cour., n. 60.)

13. Dedication of Clairvaux, in the diocese of Langres, in honour of the Blessed Virgin. St. Bernard was the first abbot of this celebrated monastery, where he died in the year 1153, aged sixty-three years. Alphonsus I., King of Portugal, in the year 1142, bound himself and his successors to pay every year, as the vassal of Our Lady of Clairvaux, fifty gold maravedis.—(Chronic. Cisterciens.)

14. Our Lady of La Rochette, near Geneva. A shepherd coming up to a bush, where he heard a plaintive voice, found there an image of the Blessed Virgin, which led to a church being built there.—(Astolph. Hist. univers. B. Mariæ Virg.)

15. Dedication of Our Lady of Terouenne, in the year 1133, by Milo, its thirteenth bishop.—(Jacob Meyerus, lib. ii., Annal. Flandriæ.)

16. Dedication of Our Lady of Milan, by Pope Martin V., in the year 1417. This church was built in 1388 by John Galleas, Duke of Milan.—(Philip. Bergom., lib. iv., Suplic. ann. 1388.)

17. Dedication of the Cave of Our Lady of Chartres, by St. Pontianus, in the year 46. Dedication of the Church of Citeaux, in the diocese of Chalons, under the title of Our Lady.—(Sebast. Rouillard, c. 4, n. 4.)

18. Dedication of Our Lady of Rheims, built by St. Nicasius, archbishop of

that city, in the year 405. This church having fallen to ruins, was rebuilt by Ebo and Hincmar. It was finished in the year 845.—(Flodoardus, lib. i. c. 6.)

19. Dedication of the Abbey of Royaumont, under the title of the Holy Cross and Our Lady, by John, Archbishop of Mytilene, in the year 1235. This monastery had been founded by St. Louis, in the year 1227.—(Gallia Christ., t. iv.)

20. Dedication of the church of Pontigny, four leagues from Auxerre, under the title of Our Lady. This abbey was founded in 1114 by Thibaud, Count of Champagne.—(Angel. Maurique.)

21. Our Lady of Talan, near Dijon.—(Ex monumentis Divion.)

22. Our Lady of the Under-ground, half a league from Grand Cairo. It is held by tradition that the Blessed Virgin lived for some years in this subterranean chapel.—(Triple Cour., n. 9.)

23. Our Lady of Consolation, near Honfleur. This chapel is much frequented; two children have been raised to life there, in memory of which their figures are there in silver.—(Ex Archiv. hujus loci.)

24. Our Lady of the Hermits, in Switzerland, where there was formerly a small hermitage in the midst of woods, occupied by St. Meinrad, till the Emperor Otho caused a church to be built there, in compliance with an order which he received from heaven. This church contains a small chapel of Our Lady, which was consecrated, it is said, in the year 1418, by Our Lord, accompanied by angels and saints, who performed the functions of the ordinary ministers of the church, in presence of the Blessed Virgin.—(Triple Cour., n. 84.)

25. Dedication of Our Lady of Toledo, in Spain, about the year 1075, by Bernard, archbishop of that city. This cathedral has a revenue of more than 300,000 livres.—(Joan. Mariana, lib. ix. c. 18.)

26. Dedication of Our Lady of Victory, near Senlis, in the year 1225, by Guarin, Bishop of Senlis, and Chancellor of France. This abbey was built by Philip Augustus, in thanksgiving for the victory which he gained over the Emperor Otho IV., at Bouvines, in the year 214.—(Carta Tabular de Victoria.)

27. Our Lady of the Basilla, in Lombardy, beyond the Po, where there is a church built by the express order of Our Lady.—(Albert. Leander, in Descriptione Italiæ.)

28. Our Lady of Vivonne, in Savoy, where a miraculous image is venerated, which was found by a labourer. This statue, having been removed three times into the village church, was always found again in its former place, which necessitated the building of a church, which was given to the Carmelites.—(Astolphus, in Histor. univers. imag. B. Virg.)

29. Our Lady of Orope, near Bielle, in Savoy; this image, of cedar wood, six feet high, is in a chapel, which St. Eusebius, Bishop of Vercelli, caused to be built, about the year 380; he often retired thither during the troubles caused by the Arians.—(Triple Cour., n. 112.)

30. Our Lady of Mondevi, at Vic, in Piedmont, where there is a picture which a tile-maker got painted on a brick pillar, which he had erected for that purpose. This pillar has been enclosed in a church, where the miracles which are wrought attract a great concourse of people.—(Hist. de Mondevi, c. 2.)

31. In the year 1116, a chorister having fallen into the well of St. Fort, which is in the church of Chartres, was saved by Our Lady. All the time that he was in the well, he heard the angels answering the public prayers which were chanted in the church; whence the custom arose at Chartres that the choir never answer aloud to the *Dominus vobiscum*, chanted at high mass and canonical hours.—(Sebast. Rouillard, Parthen., c. 6, n. 14.)

NOVEMBER.

1. Feast of All Saints, instituted in honour of Our Lady and all the saints, at Rome, by Pope Boniface IV., about the year 608, and, since, in all churches of Christendom, by Pope Gregory IV., about the year 829, at the prayer of Louis the Meek, who made a decree for its observance in all his dominions.—(Baron., ad Martyrolog. Roman.)

2. Our Lady of Emmimont, near Abbeville. This church is much visited by pilgrims.—(Antiq. d'Abbev., lib. i.)

3. Our Lady of Rennes, in Britanny. The English having made a mine to blow up the town, it is said that the candles in the chapel were found miraculously lighted; the bells rung of themselves, and the image of the Blessed Virgin was seen to stretch out its arms towards the middle of the church, where the mine was, which by that means was discovered.—(Triple Cour., Trait. 3, c. 7 and 8.)

4. Our Lady of Port Louisa, at Milan. Tradition reports that this image received one day the homage of two angels, whom several persons saw bending the knee before it.—(Astolphus, ex Hist. universal. imag. B. Virgin.)

5. Our Lady of Damietta, in Egypt. This church was consecrated in honour of the Blessed Virgin, in the year 1220, by Pelagius, apostolic legate.—(Æmilius, in Philippo.)

6. Our Lady of Valfleurie, seven leagues from Lyons. This church is so called, because the image of the Blessed Virgin on the high altar was found by shepherds in some broom, which had flowered about the feast of Christmas.—(Triple Cour., n. 47.)

7. Our Lady of the Pond, near Dijon. This image of baked earth was discovered in the year 1531, on occasion of an ox stopping always in this place, and though he grazed there constantly, the grass was always found still more abundant.—(*La même*, n. 42.)

8. Our Lady of Belle Fontaine, in the diocese of La Rochelle. This image has been honoured from time immemorial.—(Ex Archiv. hujus abbatiæ.)

9. Our Lady of Good-Succour, in Perche, near Roumalard. This church is much frequented by persons who are in affliction.—(Triple Cour., n. 52.)

10. In the year 1552, Our Lady of Loretto healed of an incurable malady a Turkish pacha, who was persuaded by one of his slaves, who was a Christian, to have recourse to the Blessed Virgin; this infidel believed him, and promised to give him his liberty, if Our Lady cured him. Having recovered his health, he sent several presents to the church of Our Lady of Loretto, and, among others, his bow and quiver.—(Tursel., Hist. Lauret., lib. iii. c. 18.)

11. On this day, about the year 1546, the Portuguese gained a great victory over the infidels, who had been before the castle of Dic, in the East Indies, for the space of seven months, and who would have carried it by storm, if Our Lady had not appeared upon the walls; which caused so great terror in the enemy's camp, that the siege was at once raised.—(Balingh. in Calend.)

12. Our Lady of the Tower, at Fribourg, built on the lands of the heretics, on the very spot where an image of Our Lady had been found.—(Triple Cour., n. 85.)

13. Dedication of the Abbey of Bec, in Normandy, in the year 1077, by Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury. This abbey of Benedictines was founded about the year 1045 by Herluin, who was its first abbot.—(Guillelm. Gemiticensis, lib. vi. de duc. Norman., cap. 9.)

14. Our Lady of the Grotto, in the diocese of Lamego, in Portugal. This chapel was cut in the rock, in the same place where an image of the Blessed Virgin had been found.—(Vasconcell. in Descript. regni Lusitan.)

15. Our Lady of Pignerol, built in honour of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, about the year 1098, by Adelaide, Countess of Savoy.—(Ex Archiv. hujus loci.)

16. Our Lady of Chieves, in Hainault, where, in the year 1130, the lady of the place, named Ida, had a chapel built near a fountain where an image of Our Lady had been found, which has since wrought many miracles.—(Triple Cour., n. 62.)

17. Institution of the confraternity of Our Lady of Sion, at Nancy, in Lorraine, in the year 1393, by Ferri, of Lorraine, Count of Vaudemont.—(*La même*, n. 66.)

18. Our Lady of Bourdieux, near Bourges. This abbey of Benedictines was built, in the year 928, by Ebbo, the Lord of Berry.—(Bzovius, ad ann. 928.)

19. Our Lady of Good Tidings, in the Abbey of St. Victor, which was visited every Saturday by Mary of Medicis. The abbey was founded in 1113 by Louis the Fat.—(Ex Archiv. S. Victoris Parisiensis.)

20. Our Lady of La Garde, near Bologna, in Italy. This picture was in the Church of Santa Sophia, at Constantinople, with this inscription: "This

picture, painted by St. Luke, must be taken to the mountain of La Garde, and placed over the altar of the church." A Greek monk set out for Italy about the year 433, with the picture entrusted to him, and deposited it on the mountain of La Garde.—(Bzovius, ad ann. 1433, n. 379.)

21. Presentation of Our Lady. This feast was instituted in the Greek church more than nine hundred years ago, since St. Germanus, who held the see of Costantinople in the year 715, composed a sermon upon it.—(Baronius, in Notis ad Martyrolog.)

22. Institution of the Confraternity of the Presentation of Our Lady, at St. Omer's, in the year 1481.—(Adalardus Tassart, in Chron., ad ann. 1481.)

23. Our Lady of the Vault, near the town of St. Anastasia, in the environs of Florence.—(Triple Cour., n. 102.)

24. In the year 1535, Our Lady of Montserrat restored the use of speech to a Savoyard who had lost it.—(His. Montiss.)

25. Our Lady of the Rock, in the territory of Fiezoli, in Tuscany. This image is placed in a rock, where two shepherds retired to pray; Our Lady ordered them to build a church in this place.—(Archangel. Janius, in Annal. PP. Servitarum.)

26. Our Lady of the Mountains, in Italy, between the Esquiline and Viminal Hills. This image was miraculously found in the year 1500.—(Triple Cour., n. 99.)

27. Dedication of the town of Lesina, in the campagna of Rome. This town was given to Our Lady in the year 1400 by Margaret, Queen of Poland, and mother of Ladislas.—(Bzovius, liv. ix. de Sign. Eccles.)

28. Our Lady of Walsingham, in England, greatly honoured by Edward I., who, as he was playing one day at chess, rose up instinctively from his seat, and at the same time a large stone became loose in the roof, and fell upon the chair where he had been sitting. From that time he particularly honoured Our Lady of Walsingham.—(Thomas Walsingh., in Hist. Angl. in Edward I.)

29. Our Lady of the Crown, at Palermo, so called because it was there that the kings of Sicily received the royal crown, as holding it from the Mother of God, and unwilling to wear it for any but her.—(Thom. Facellus, lib. viii. prioris decad. de rebus Siculis.)

30. Our Lady of Genesta, on the coast of Genoa, in Italy. A poor woman, named Petruccia, undertook to build this church, which appeared to every one impossible; she did not fail to lay the first stone of it, and assured every one that she should not die without the Blessed Virgin and St. Augustin finished this work. In fact, this church was found miraculously completed a short time afterwards.—(Segninus, in Chronic.)

DECEMBER.

1. Our Lady of Ratisbonne, in Bavaria, founded by Duke Theodon, after receiving baptism from St. Rupert, Bishop of Salzburg and apostle of Bavaria, who afterwards consecrated this church.—(Canisius, lib. v. de B. Virg., cap. 25.)

2. Our Lady of Didinia, in Cappadocia, before which St. Basil besought the Blessed Virgin to remedy the disorders caused by Julian the apostate; he was there favoured with an apparition which presaged the death of the emperor.—(Baronius, ad ann. 303.)

3. Our Lady of Filermo, near Malta. This image having remained in the midst of the ruins of the Church of St. Mark of Rhodes, was removed into the Church of St. Catherine, and finally, the knights having quitted Rhodes, it was placed in the Church of St. Laurence, and this having been entirely burnt down, the image remained entire.—(Triple Cour., n. 91.)

4. Our Lady of La Chapelle, at Abbeville. This church was built about the year 1400, on a small hill, where formerly they worshipped idols.—(Antiq. d'Abbev., liv. i.)

5. In the year 1584 was instituted the first congregation of Our Lady at the Jesuits' college, at Rome, whence is derived their custom of establishing it in all their houses.—(Balingh. in Calend.)

6. Our Lady of Fourviere, at Lyons, on the mountain famous for miracles, and for the extraordinary concourse of the people of that great city, particularly on all Saturdays.

7. On this day, a Sunday, in the year 1550, the canonesses of Our Lady of Paris being in procession before the image of the Blessed Virgin, which is near the door of the choir, a heretic from Lorraine, breaking through the crowd, sword in hand, sought to strike that image, but he was prevented by the assistants, and on the Thursday following, he was executed before the porch of Our Lady.—(Du Breuil, Antiq. de Paris, liv. i.)

8. The Conception of the Blessed Virgin. This festival began in the East, more than nine hundred years ago, since mention is made of it by St. John Damascen, who lived in 721. It was instituted in England in the year 1100 by St. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury; afterwards in the diocese of Lyons, in the year 1145; and finally, Sixtus IV. commanded, in the year 1576, the celebration of it throughout Christendom.—(Joan. Molan., in Annot. 1 ad Usuard.)

9. Our Lady of the Conception, at Naples, so called because, in the year 1618, the viceroy, with all his court, and the soldiery of Naples, made a vow, in the Church of Our Lady the Great, to believe and defend the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin.—(Triple Cour., n. 43.)

10. Institution of nuns of the Conception of Our Lady, by Beatrix de Sylva, to whom it is said that Our Lady appeared in the year 1484, clothed with a white robe and a scapular of the same colour with a blue mantle. Beatrix, sister of

B. Amadeus, took this habit for that of her order, approved by Innocent VIII., under the institute of Citeaux.—(Vasconcell., in Descript. regni Lusit.)

11. Our Lady of Angels, in the forest of Livry, four leagues from Paris. Three merchants of Anjou having been ill treated in 1212 in this forest, by robbers who tied them to trees, intending to leave them there to die, had recourse to the Blessed Virgin, who immediately sent to them three angels to restore them to liberty. Since this miracle, several more have been wrought, which have made this chapel very celebrated.—(Des registres de l'abbaye de Livry.)

12. Our Lady of Good Tidings, at Abbeville. This little chapel, which is in St. Peter's priory, has always been much frequented.—(Antiq. d'Abbev., liv. i.)

13. Our Lady of the Holy Chapel, at Paris. This image, which is under the portal of the lower Holy Chapel, has wrought many miracles.

14. Our Lady of Albe la Royale, in Hungary, was built by St. Stephen, King of Hungary, who had given his kingdom to the Blessed Virgin.—(Joann. Bonifacius, Hist. Virg., lib. ii. c. i.)

15. Octave of the Conception of Our Lady, instituted by Pope Sixtus IV.—(Bullarium.)

16. Institution of the celebrated confraternity of Our Lady of Good Deliverance, in the Church of St. Stephen des Grès, at Paris, about the year 1533, to which Gregory XIII. granted ample indulgences in the year 1581.

17. Our Lady of Amiens, the cathedral. This church had for its first bishop St. Firminus, who received the crown of martyrdom during the persecution of Dioclesian. A part of the head of St. John Baptist is seen in this church, which a traveller named Galo brought thither on his return from Constantinople, in the year 1205.—(Locrius Mariæ Augustæ, lib. iv. c. 59.)

18. Dedication of Our Lady of Marseilles, by St. Lazarus, in presence of his two sisters, Mary Magdalen and Martha, and of three holy prelates—Maximus, Trophimus, and Eutropius.—(Canisius, lib. v., Moral.)

19. In the year 657, as St. Ildefonsus, Archbishop of Toledo, was saying matins, Our Lady, it is said, appeared to him, accompanied by a great number of the blessed, and holding in her hand the book which he had composed in her honour. She thanked him for it, and out of gratitude gave him a white chasuble. This celestial present is still preserved at Oviedo, where Alphonsus the Chaste, King of Castile, had it solemnly taken to the Church of St. Saviour, which he had caused to be built.—(Baron., ad ann. 657, n. 42.)

20. The Abbey of Our Lady of Moleme, of the order of St. Benedict, in the diocese of Langres, was founded on this day, in the year 1075, by St. Robert, who was its abbot.—(Gallia Christ., t. iv.)

21. Foundation of St. Acheul, near Amiens, under the title of Our Lady, by St. Firminus, first bishop of that city.—(Ex archiv. S. Achioli.)

22. Our Lady of Chartres, in Beauce. This church, which was built in the time of the apostles, after being several times demolished, was re-erected in its

present state by St. Fulbert, fifty-fifth bishop of Chartres.—(Sebast. Rouillard, Parthen., c. 5.)

23. Our Lady of the Ardilliers, at Saumur, in Anjou. Its name is illustrious throughout France, as well on account of the concourse of people who were attracted thither, as from a fountain which cured several maladies. This image represents Our Lady of Pity, who holds in her arms her Son dead, whose head is supported by an angel.—(Locrius, Mariæ Augustæ, lib. iv., c. 60.)

24. Celebration of the virginal marriage of Our Lady and St. Joseph, kept as a festival for a long time past at Sens and in several churches of France.—(Sausseyus, in Martyrolog. Gallic.)

25. On this day, at the hour of midnight, the Blessed Virgin brought forth the Saviour of the world, in the stable of Bethlehem, where a fountain sprung up miraculously on the same day.—(Baron., in Apparat. ad annal.)

26. Institution of the confraternity of the Conception of Our Lady, at the Augustinian Convent, at Paris, in the year 1443, where there have been ample indulgences granted since by Pope Innocent III.—(Du Breuil, Antiq., lib. ii.)

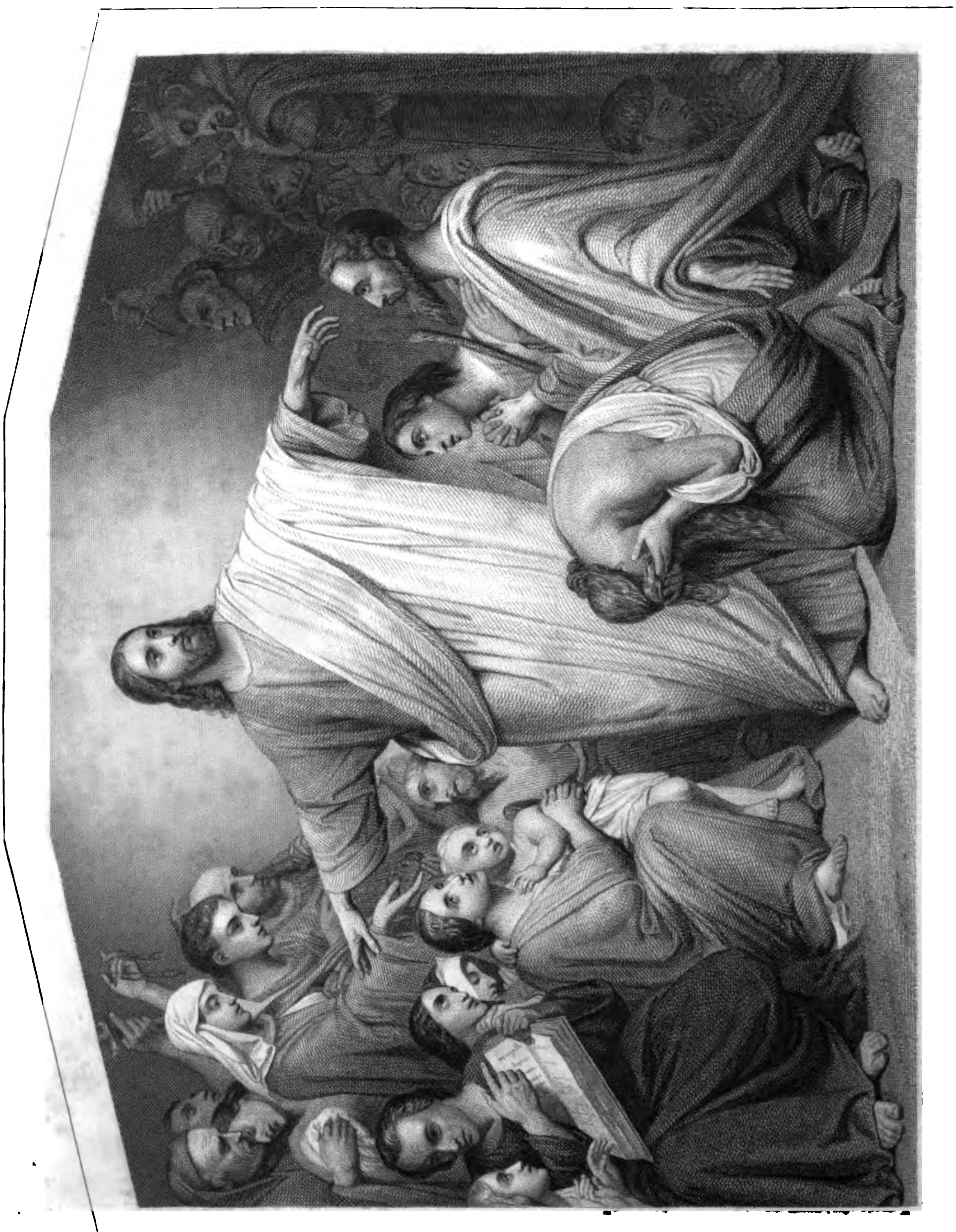
27. Institution of the order of Knights of Our Lady, in the year 1370, by Louis II., Duke of Bourbon. (Andr. Favin, lib. viii., Hist. de Navarre, et lib. iii. of the Theatre d'Honneur.)

28. Our Lady of Pontoise, seven leagues from Paris. This image, which is set up on the front of the church of the suburb of this town, on the side of Rouen, is celebrated for the miracles which are wrought there.—(Ex Archiv. hujus eccles.)

29. Our Lady of Spire, in Germany. St. Bernard, entering this church on the 29th of December, 1146, was honourably received there by the canons, who conducted him to the choir, singing the *Salve Regina*. The antiphon being finished, St. Bernard saluted the image of the Blessed Virgin in these terms: *O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria!* and it is said that she answered: *Salve Bernarde!* The words of this saint to the image are seen engraved in a circle on the pavement of the church, on the same spot where he pronounced them, and they have since been added to the *Salve Regina*, which was composed in the year 1040, by Herman, surnamed Contractus, a Benedictine monk.—(Angel. Manrique, annal. Cist., ad ann. 1146, c. 10, &c.)

30. St. Mary's of Boulogne, in Picardy. This church was founded by the monks of St. Augustin in the year 1159; it was laid in ruins by Henry VIII., King of England, in the year 1544, secularised and made a cathedral in the year 1559, according to Locrius.—(Gall. Christ., t. iv.)

31. About a hundred years before the birth of our Saviour, the image of Our Lady of Chartres, which the Druids had consecrated to the Blessed Virgin, parturient, raised to life the son of Geoffry, king or prince of Montlhery, who, having fallen into a well, had been found dead; out of gratitude for this favour, he made several presents to this image, as the history of this miracle attests, which is represented in the stained glass of the great church.—(Sebast. Rouillard, Parthen, c. iii.)



MONUMENT TO THE GLORY OF MARY.

LITANY

OF

THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN,

Accompanied with Meditations.

BY

THE ABBÉ EDWARD BARTHE,

HONORARY CANON OF RODEZ.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY

THE VERY REV. F. C. HUSENBETH, D.D.,

PROVOST AND VICAR-GENERAL OF NORTHAMPTON.

LITANY

OF

THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN.

INTRODUCTION.

THE word *Litany*, from the Greek Λιτανευω *(I supplicate)*, signifies, in Latin, *rogatio*, in English, *public prayer*. We know of no Litanies formally approved by the Church, except those of the holy name of Jesus, of the Blessed Virgin, and of the Saints.

That of the Blessed Virgin bears also the name of *Litany of Loretto*, not that it is certain that it was composed in the place consecrated by recollections attached even to the person of Mary; for it is not known where nor by whom was formed that series of pious invocations, which are so affecting, in honour of the beloved Mother of the Divine Jesus. But, according to a respectable tradition, it was at Loretto that the solemn chanting of these Litanies began; and it is from thence that the use of them has been spread throughout the Church by the innumerable pilgrims who have not ceased to visit this venerable sanctuary.

But, whatever be the date and origin of them, we know the value attached by Catholic piety to these supplications, which abound so much in devout praise, so full of sweet unction, so magnificent in imagery and expressions of admiration. They present, in their harmonious assemblage, a kind of rich abridgment of all that could be said most pious, most worthy, and most grand to the glory of the most holy Virgin, since she left the

earth to reign with her adorable Son in heaven, and to receive there, on the part of men, all the homage of which a created being can be the object.

The special veneration with which we honour Mary goes back, in reality, to the time of her glorious Assumption. That humble daughter of Eve had said, when, still bearing in her chaste womb the blessed fruit of the Holy Ghost, she visited St. Elizabeth, who was herself the mother of a miraculous child, although by a very different act of the Divine power,—she had said, in the immortal canticle of the ecstacy of her gratitude, that "all generations should call her blessed."[1] Astonishing words! words which one would feel tempted to regard almost as foolish in the mouth of a mortal woman! . . . But it was not a mere woman who spoke, it was the Mother of the God-man, "full of grace,"[2] the spouse of that Divine Spirit who had before enlightened the Prophets of Israel; and from the heights of the mountains of Hebron, directing her view to the farthest depths of the future, she could with confidence declare what God showed to her of his future glory among men.

And observe how all generations have come forward faithfully to accomplish this prediction. Hear how the echoes of the Catholic history of eighteen centuries resound with the incomparable name of Mary, and repeat, in accents resounding like "the noise of the great trumpet,"[3] the grandeur, the merits, the power of this divine Mother.

When we look back to the primitive church, we find from the beginning the glory of Mary celebrated by the arts. Without speaking here of the painting attributed to the Evangelist St. Luke—the picture so much honoured in times past in the East, and the authenticity of which is not scientifically devoid of all proof[4]—we have from the second century, or, at least, the third, a painting of Mary, which the eye of the antiquary may still study

(1) St. Luke i. 48.
(2) St. Luke i. 28.
(3) Isaias xxvii. 13.
(4) See the Annales de Philos. Chret., t. ix. p. 74, *et suiv.*

at the present day in the catacombs of Rome. This very ancient monument of Catholic devotion sufficiently shows that as soon as the church, in the midst of persecutions, had got a footing in the world, Christian artists consecrated their pencils to the most holy Virgin. In the fourth century, we find upon several sarcophagi, or Christian tombs, a group of the Blessed Virgin and Infant Jesus, in which the figure of Mary is redolent, at the same time, of youth and of divine purity. This occasioned a learned man of our days, M. Raoul Rochette, to make this important observation, wholly founded on his knowledge of arts and monuments: "that it is not correct to say, as the Protestant historian Basnage has maintained, that representations of the Virgin began only after the council of Ephesus; for," he adds, "among the Christian sarcophagi of the Vatican, where she is seen represented, there are certainly more than one anterior to that epoch."[1] The fifth century presents us, under the reign of the Greek Emperor Anastasius, imperial coins, the reverse of which bears the monogram of Mary, encircled with stars, a homage which continued under a great number of his successors, among whom the Empress Theophania even had engraved upon her coins the figure of Mary, her head surrounded by a nimbus, with the inscription: **Θεοτίκος** *(Mother of God).* From the fifth century to our own time, it is well known how much the arts have multiplied testimonies of devotion to the most Blessed Virgin. It is true that at a certain period they fell into singular aberrations, such as making black statues of the Mother of God; but the works of their bad taste are not the less proofs of the faith and piety of those times, which are called ages of ignorance, but which, nevertheless, have produced, by their incomparable painted windows, and their prodigious churches dedicated to God under the title of Mary, things which are concealed from our modern civilization, and which it would not have the courage to attempt.

We must not suppose, however, that churches consecrated to Mary date only from the middle ages: to find their origin we

(1) Discours sur l'art du Christianisme, p. 34, note 1.

must go back to Pope Callixtus I., who built, in the most populous quarter of Rome a chapel under the name of Our Lady beyond the Tiber, in the year 224; we must even go farther back still; for, before that period, we find in Spain the Church of Our Lady of the Pillar, at Saragossa, and in Syria several other churches, also dedicated to the divine Virgin. Thus, by an uninterrupted series of monuments, from the earliest times of Christianity down to the present, has architecture, inspired by faith and piety, united its voice, so imposing and so powerful, to those of the other arts, to exalt the name of the august Mother of the Saviour of the world. How fine, how truly magnificent a spectacle would it be, if it were granted us to contemplate, at one view, all the riches of stone and marble, of wood and precious metals, of gold and azure offered to God by the arts of the Catholic world, in the course of eighteen centuries, to bless him and glorify him for the graces, the virtues, and the power which he has bestowed on her in favour of men! . . . What eye could bear the effulgent sight? What heart would not be full of lively emotion? What mouth would not exclaim in transport: Glory be to the Lord, who has rendered all ages so faithful to accomplish this prediction of his divine Mother: "Behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed!"

But there is a voice superior to all the voices of the arts, as the moral order is above the natural,—it is the voice of science, eloquence, and genius, by word and by writing; and certainly it has not been wanting to the prophecy of the most Blessed Virgin. There remain but very few writings of the first two Christian centuries, and yet already in the second century we read in the illustrious martyr St. Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, an eulogium of Mary most expressive in its brevity: "For as she (Eve) was seduced by the word of an angel, so that she fled away from God, having disobeyed his word, so this virgin (Mary) was induced by the announcement of an angel to bear God in her womb, being obedient to his word. And as the former was seduced so as to fly from God, so the latter was induced to obey God, that the Virgin Mary might become the advocate of

the virgin Eve."[1] After him, SS. Athanasius, Basil, Ephrem, Gregory Nazianzen, Cyril, Epiphanius, John Damascen, then St. Bernard, St. Anselm, and that great genius who has been called the last of the fathers of the Church, the immortal Bossuet; all the most eminent men of genius, in a word, of the East and West of Christianity have in their turns celebrated Mary, exalted her dignity, her virtues, her privileges, and the admirable efficacy of her intercession.

The Litany of Loretto forms, as we have said, a sort of rich and felicitous abridgment of all these praises, of all these testimonies of veneration and love, of devotion and confidence; it is, therefore, one of the most beautiful acts of homage which we can offer to this divine Mother. Accordingly, Pope Clement VIII., in 1601, forbid any other to be recited in her honour in public prayers; Paul V., in his turn, granted in 1606 an indulgence of sixty days to all who should assist on a Saturday at the solemn singing of it in the churches of the Dominicans; Sixtus V. and Benedict XIII., one of two hundred days, to all the faithful who should devoutly recite it; and Pius VII. extended this last indulgence to three hundred days. Thence we see how much this Litany has become an object of predilection to Catholic piety, which has delighted to multiply the recital and vary the singing of it, and embellish it with all the charms of the sweetest melody and harmony. The art of engraving, which speaks to the eye, as singing speaks to the ear, could not fail to unite its precious resources to this pious tribute of the art of music. In fact, towards the end of the eighteenth century, certain celebrated German engravers published a series of figures and symbolical images, equally ingenious and significant, destined to explain in succession to the eye, all the titles which the church gives to Mary in the Litany of Loretto, and enriched with texts from the Holy Scripture, which are applicable to her in the literal sense, in the spiritual, and also in the accommodated senses. But this

(1) Contra hæreses., lib. v. c. 19.

masterpiece, produced by the hands of these celebrated artists, is very rare and but little known.

O Mary! may the author of these meditations not fail in the attempt which circumstances, in some degree providential, have enabled him to undertake. It will be, without doubt, sweet, and very sweet, to me to pour out my soul before you and in your honour, and to exert myself to make more and more known all that is great, holy, good, compassionate, and glorious in the divine Mother of my Saviour. But how can I speak of you in a worthy manner, after so many others, who have written of you pages so beautiful and affecting? How can I even venture to attempt it, when St. Bernard has said that nothing alarmed him more than to have to speak of your greatness and glory?[1] . . . . I will venture, nevertheless, O Mary, you whom I love to call my ever good and amiable Mother, I will venture, for the love of your divine Son, who finds his own glory in yours, I will venture for the love of you, O masterpiece of the Almighty, most lively image of his adorable perfections! I will venture, with the confidence of a child who works for his mother, and under her eyes, and who must hope for aid and succour from her tenderness. To you then I give my mind, my heart, and my pen, O divine Mary, as it is to you that I dedicate this feeble testimony of my respect, my admiration, my confidence, my love, and my filial devotion.

(1) Serm. 4, de Assumpt. B. M. V.

MEDITATION I.

KYRIE ELEISON!

WHY does the Church make us direct to God the humble aspiration of prayer, before the several invocations which she afterwards makes us address to Mary? . . . . It is to recall to our minds that truth of faith so energetically expressed by the apostle St. Paul: "Of him, and by him, and in him, are all things: to him be glory for ever."[1] Yes, certainly the creature, even the most august, the most adorned with virtues, the most brilliant in glory and power, is nothing before him, nothing without him, nothing but through him. If the most holy Virgin is able to assist us wonderfully by her protection, it is to him then that we owe this inestimable advantage: from him alone comes that power, from him alone proceed all those graces that flow upon us.

The Church has farther in view to inspire us with an exalted idea of the supreme greatness of God, a lively and profound sentiment of respect, of religious fear, of the pious subjection of all our faculties before "Him who is."[2] He alone owes nothing to any one; all that thinks and wills, all that breathes, all that lives, all that exists, is indebted to him alone for thought, will, breath, life, being, and the preservation of being. Alone self-existent, the "Blessed and only Mighty,"[3] "who only hath immortality,"[4] "who alone doth wonderful things,"[5] who alone is great, "alone eternal,"[6] alone "the Beginning and the End"[7] of all, besides whom "there is no other God,"[8] he alone deserves the title of *the Lord* by pre-eminence; and by this title the church would excite our faith in the infinite majesty of him to whom we have the immense honour to speak. Ah! let us feel before him our extreme inferiority, our unspeakable littleness as creatures,

(1) Rom. xi. 36.
(2) Exod. iii. 14.
(3) 1 Tim. vi. 15.
(4) 1 Tim. vi. 16.
(5) Ps. lxxi. 18.
(6) 2 Macc. i. 25.
(7) Apoc. xxii. 13.
(8) Deut. xxxii. 39.

before his infinite greatness as the Creator; and as we implore him, let us keep ourselves at the feet of his supreme majesty, all humbled, all annihilated with respect and adoration. Let us acknowledge, with all the powers of our soul, that we are but "dust and ashes;"[1] that "our substance is as nothing before him;"[2] that we do not deserve to speak to him, even by the silent adoration of the heart.

Why, again, does the Church, in this first invocation of the Lord, make us say, as if we were uttering a cry of distress, "Have mercy on us!" . . . . . It is, in reality, because we are much to be compassionated; because our misery is great, profound, almost immeasurable. In our body, frailty, infirmity, pain, suffering, at times almost intolerable; in our soul, wearisomeness, sadness, severe afflictions, devouring passions; clouds in our understanding; disorderly affections in the heart; dangers, shameful propensities, disorders very ignominious in our senses, within and without us numerous enemies of our eternal salvation; in our will feebleness, indecision, often, and too often, cowardice, drowsiness, and even fatal lethargy. O yes, once more, we are much to be pitied: our misery is inexpressible. Every moment we run the risk of losing all without recovery,—the risk of falling into misery unequalled, immeasurable, and eternal. We have, then, but too much reason to exclaim, with St. Teresa, "Alas! O Lord, while this mortal life lasts, the eternal is always in peril. O life, the enemy of my happiness, why am I not permitted to put an end to thee? I suffer thee, because my God suffers thee; I take care of thee, because thou dost belong to him. But do not betray me, and be not ungrateful to me. Alas! O Lord, how is my exile prolonged! . . . . It is true that all time is short to gain thy eternity. But one single day and one hour are too long to those who are afraid of offending thee, and who do not even know if they do offend thee!"[3] We have but too much reason to cry out with the apostle, when beaten about by the tempest,

(1) Gen. xviii. 27. (2) Ps. xxxviii. 6.
(3) Elevation to God.

"Lord, save us, we perish!"[1] and with the Church, our mother, "Lord, have mercy on us!" We ought always to pronounce these words with a lively sense of the immense need we have of a divine commiseration, and of an infinite compassion, exceeding the excessive extent and excessive depth of our misery. Humbly prostrate here, before the most high majesty of the Lord, let us then say to him, like poor men in the depth of poverty, like the sick who are tormented with cruel sufferings, like shipwrecked mariners with death before their eyes:—

Sovereign Being, Being by pre-eminence, Being of all beings, from the height of thy supreme greatness, deign to lend thine ear to our voice. It is the cry of destitution, the cry of infirmity, pain, and peril; it is the cry of the heart which invokes, which implores thy omnipotence and thy infinite goodness; it is the cry of faith which makes us see in thee "a merciful and gracious God,"[2] at the same time that it makes us say, "Lord, have mercy on us!" It is the cry of faith, which shows us also in heaven, close to the throne of thy eternal glory, a Mother, whom thy Church directs us to call *Mother of Mercy*[3]—a Mother whose "praise" thou wouldst have the "earth" to be "full of,"[4] even as of thine own; a Mother to whom it is so sweet to us to raise our accents "of benediction," which return upon our heads like the dew of graces and "divine blessings;"[5] a Mother, who prays for us, and with whom we unite in repeating to thee—

Lord, have mercy on us!

Kyrie, eleison!

(1) St. Matt. viii. 25. (2) 2 Esdras ix. 31.
(3) Salve Regina, etc. (4) Habac. iii. 3.
(5) Num. xxiv. 9.

MEDITATION II.

CHRISTE, ELEISON!

THE soul, deeply sensible of her misery, and regarding the majesty of the Lord, from whom alone she can expect her relief, her strength, and salvation, does not implore him without trembling; she remains as it were downcast at the feet of his infinite greatness. The Church raises up her courage in the second invocation, where she, in some measure, veils the infinite distance which separates God from the creature, and makes him behold him to whom this invocation is addressed only in that point of view which brings him near to us, and which can best open our hearts to hope. What, in reality, does the name of *Jesus Christ* convey to the ear of Catholic faith? "The Word made flesh, who has dwelt among us, full of grace and truth;[1] the Mediator between God and man;[2] the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world;[3] one tempted in all things like as we are, yet without sin,[4] made like to his brethren in all things, that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest,"[5] in order to compassionate our sad condition, as having been the companion of man's miseries; "the great high priest that hath passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God;[6] he that hath the key of David; he that openeth, and no man shutteth."[7]

When she places on our lips the name of this divine Pontiff, the Church then proposes to us the motive best calculated to dilate our hearts contracted by fear; she invites them in the most efficacious manner to give themselves up to the sentiment of Christian hope, which keeps the soul equally removed from despair and presumption. How can we presume on the goodness of God, when we believe that in order "to blot out the hand-

(1) St. John i. 14.
(2) 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.
(3) St. John i. 29.
(4) Heb. iv. 15.
(5) Heb. ii. 17.
(6) Heb. iv. 14.
(7) Apoc. iii. 7.

writing of the decree that was against us, it was necessary that Jesus Christ should fasten it to the cross?"[1] How shall we despair on account of our weakness, or of the pardon of our faults, however enormous they may be, when we believe that "God so loved the world, as to give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him may not perish, but may have life everlasting?"[2] .... O we do not sufficiently esteem this faith in Jesus Christ, we too little value its admirable advantages. It is a supernatural gift, which not only exceeds all our power, but all human ideas, and every desire that our nature is capable of forming. It is a gift, without which it is impossible to arrive at the happiness of heaven; for, "without faith it is impossible to please God,"[3] and how can he who does not please God be judged worthy to enter into the participation of his eternal happiness? It is a good of no less value than eternal life, the eternal possession of the sovereign good; for the Divine Master has said that "this is eternal life, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."[4] ... And even in this world, is not this the only true life? "He that heareth my word, and believeth Him that sent me, hath life everlasting, *the man-God has also said;* and cometh not into judgment, but is passed from death to life."[5] The life, then, of those who have not the faith of our Saviour, Jesus, is death. In reality, it is to be a slave to the "prince of darkness,"[6] to be without infallible light in the midst of cruel uncertainties of the understanding, as to the duties of man and his destiny; to be without a guide, without a pilot in the midst of rocks, without consolation amidst all the afflictions of the earth, without strength against the assaults of the passions, of misfortune, of sorrow; to be deprived of the sweet and pure truth of the lessons of the Word incarnate, of the incomparable power of his example, of the inexhaustible resources of his merits, of the magnificent hopes of which his word is the pledge; alas! what a lot is this, a thousand times to

(1) Col. ii. 14.
(2) St. John iii. 16.
(3) Heb. xi. 6.
(4) St. John xvii. 3.
(5) St. John v. 24.
(6) Ephes. vi. 12.

be deplored! . . . But thence, what an obligation have we to the Lord, who has favoured us with the inestimable treasure of faith.

O Jesus, O eternal Priest, adorable Pontiff, adorable victim of our salvation, it is thou who hast given us the faith which we have in thee; be thou a thousand and a thousand times blessed by all the pulsations of our heart! What thanks can ever equal a favour which he hath not done . . . "to every nation,"[1] still sitting "in darkness and in the shadow of death."[2] . . . . O vouchsafe to "confirm, O God, what thou hast wrought in us;"[3] deign to make the gift fruitful, which we have received from thy infinite liberality. "Help thou our unbelief,"[4] grant that our faith may "work by charity."[5] It is true that we are very ungrateful, very culpable; but are we not thy "brethren,"[6] for whom thou hast shed thy blood? Behold, moreover, between thee and us thy divine Mother, to whose patronage we fly[7] in our distress. Is not the voice of Mary still more powerful with thy heart than that of Bethsabee was formerly with the heart of Solomon? And if that prince said to his mother: "My mother, ask; for I must not turn away thy face,"[8] how much more wilt thou yield to the requests of her, a few words from whom sufficed, long ago, to obtain of thee the first of thy miracles?[9] She now interposes her petition to preserve us from those "arrows of the Lord,"[10] which thy adorable heart so much desires to see changed, through our compunction, into the inflamed darts of divine love, as formerly, in her apparition to St. Dominic, she showed thee to him, combining his zeal with that of St Francis of Assisium, and thus appeased thy justice, irritated against the world. Full of confidence in her maternal influence, we venture to say, "Out of the depths"[11] of our abyss—

CHRIST, HAVE MERCY ON US! *Christe, eleison!*

(1) Ps. cxlvii. 9. (2) St. Luke i. 79.
(3) Ps. lxvii. 29. (4) St. Mark ix. 23.
(5) St. Luke xvii. 5. (6) St. John xx. 17.
(7) *Sub tuum.* (8) 3 Kings ii. 20.
(9) St. John ii. 3, 4. (10) Job vi. 4.
(11) Ps. cxxix. 1.

MEDITATION III.

KYRIE, ELEISON!

After penetrating our hearts with Christian hope, by reviving our faith in our divine Mediator, the Church makes us repeat, "Lord, have mercy upon us!" And this, because having once piously invoked the adorable name of Jesus Christ, this name of *Lord*, given to God, can no longer be at all formidable to us. If the Man-God, in fact, deigns to cover us with his infinite merits, as with a shield, can we any more tremble to excess before the supreme Majesty? Can we resemble Adam, who, when he had become a transgressor, was afraid of God to that degree as almost to lose his reason? For he sought to hide himself from his presence,[1] as if he did not know that "no creature is invisible in his sight; but all things are naked and open to the eyes of him,[2] and that darkness shall not be dark to *him*, and night shall be light as the day."[3] . . . . O rather, in the name of that sweet Saviour, why should we not speak to the Sovereign Master with filial confidence, since it was he who "sent his Son, ... that we might receive the adoption of sons . . . . *and* hath sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father!"[4] Prodigious honour! prodigious benefit granted to guilty man! This God, who owed us nothing but reprobation, was not contented with redeeming us,—with restoring us by his only Son,—he was pleased "that we should be called, and should be, the sons of God."[5] "Behold, *then*, what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us;"[6] behold, what the merits of Jesus Christ have availed us! They have so admirably "reconciled all things,"[7] that they have made of man, who had been driven back

(1) Gen. iii. 10. (2) Heb. iv. 13.
(3) Ps. cxxxviii. 11. (4) Gal. iv. 4, 5, 6.
(5) 1 St. John iii. 1. (6) 1 St. John iii. 1.
(7) Col. i. 20.

to hell by the infinite holiness and justice of God, the cherished child of God himself!

It is true that we have disregarded this high dignity which had been conferred upon us by baptism; it is true that we have lessened, by sins which were "not to death,"[1] or that we have even lost, by mortal sin, the rights which accompany this excellent title. But, whatever has been our case, we have not been able to forfeit that of relying on the merits of our Saviour to reascend, by the means which he has destined to apply them to us, to the distinguished honour from which we may have fallen. Yes, this infinite treasure of his mortal life, of his sufferings and his immolation on Calvary, Jesus Christ has placed irrevocably in our hands; he has given it to us, he has made it in some measure our inalienable property; and to our last breath we may make use of it to call upon the *Lord*, and to obtain the graces, of which we stand in need. For Jesus himself has said, "If you shall ask the Father any thing in my name, he will give it to you."[2] O with what honour, what riches, what power it has then pleased God to endow the soul of a Christian! And what heart animated with faith will not find happiness in borrowing here the sublime accents of the holy man Job, "What is a man, that thou shouldst magnify him?"[3]

While we repeat to God, "Lord, have mercy on us," let us then interiorly prostrate before him, even to the dust; let us be seized with admiration, motionless with astonishment, that we may, at any hour, speak to a God so great; and that a God so great should deign to lend an ear to the sighs of creatures debased by the disorder of sin. But, at the same time, let us expand our hearts, let us dilate them as in the bosom of a father, who cannot but feel a tender love for his children. For when we unite ourselves to Jesus, and appear before God in the adorable person of his Son, it is impossible that this cry of the heart which earnestly entreats his mercy and his succour should not be

(1) 1 St. John v. 16. (2) St. John xvi. 23.
(3) Job vii. 17.

favourably heard. Our voice, united to the voice of our divine Mediator, in a manner changes its nature; it loses what it has, as a human voice, feeble, unworthy even, and defiled, to partake of the divine power, purity, and sanctity, of the divine efficacy of the voice of Jesus.

Lord, it is in the name, and by the infinite merits of the Mediator, which thou hast had the unspeakable charity to transfer to us; it is in him, and by him, that in *thy* sight we "pour out *our* prayer," and before *thee* we declare "our trouble,"[1] in crying out, "Have mercy on us!" "We are no more thy servants, but thy children: heirs also through God,[2] *Jesus Christ*, having a confidence in the entering into the holies by the blood of Christ.[3] *We are* his brethren: he is our eldest brother,[4] but we are joint heirs with Christ.[5] *It is then* with confidence that we go to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy;"[6] and that we beseech thee to have mercy on us, as thou wouldst have compassion on him, if it were possible for him to suffer the necessities and dangers in which we find ourselves. Ah! *Lord*, it is no longer we who say it to thee, it is he himself, he, our divine brother, who says to thee by our heart and by our tongue, "Have mercy on us!" And together with him, does not his august Mother, that beloved daughter of heaven, say to thee that she is our "sister,"[7] *that she is* our *kinswoman* according to "the flesh,[8] in which Jesus Christ is come,[9] that invincible lion of the tribe of Juda,"[10] who triumphed over death by his resurrection, over the corruption of the world by his adorable purity and infinite sanctity, over the devil by the glory and power of his cross? In the name of this divine Saviour, and in union with Mary, once more we cry out—

LORD, HAVE MERCY ON US!

Kyrie, eleison!

(1) Ps. cxli. 3. (2) Gal. iv. 7.
(3) Heb. x. 19. (4) Rom. viii. 29.
(5) Rom. viii. 17. (6) Heb. iv. 16.
(7) Gen. xii. 13. (8) Rom. ix. 3.
(9) 1 St. John iv. 2. (10) Apoc. v. 5.

MEDITATION IV.

CHRISTE, AUDI NOS!

THE more we unite our heart and voice with the heart and voice of Jesus, to implore the divine bounty and mercy, the more will our prayer ascend to the throne of the Eternal, as "an odour of sweetness."[1] Here, then, to excite in a more lively manner our faith and confidence in this "Mediator of the New Testament,[2] who is able also to save for ever them that come to God by him;"[3] to enter intimately into those admirable dispositions of his adorable heart solemnly praying, the evening before his death, for them who should believe in him,"[4] we address ourselves to him afresh, by entreating him to *hear us*. Not but that his ear is always open to us, or that he rejects the voices of those whom he has loved more than himself; but we beseech him to hear us, as a good father hears his poor children, as a good mother the cherished fruit of her womb, however ungrateful we may have been for the past. We beg of him to incline towards us that ear of the heart, which hears with tender interest a beloved voice, which answers to that voice by an effusion of benevolence and love, which even goes so far as to establish between the Christian soul and itself an ineffable intercourse of sentiments worthy for ever of the admiration of the angels themselves. O a thousand times happy is that soul, who, possessing the inestimable gift of sanctifying grace, can thus speak to Jesus, as a friend to his friend; but this is not enough, as the spouse of the Canticles to her beloved spouse, to her adorable spouse! Happy, a thousand times, is she who can say with well-founded confidence: "He is mine, and I am his,"[5] and who deserves to hear, in her intimate communications with the divine Jesus, that

(1) Eph. v. 2. (2) Heb. ix. 15.
(3) Heb. vii. 25. (4) St. John xvii. 20.
(5) Cant. ii. 16.

word so consoling, that heavenly word: "Let thy voice sound in my ears, for thy voice is sweet."[1]

But, alas! our little fidelity, our little zeal, our little faith and love, deprive us, very often, of these delightful communications with our God. We admit a third party between ourselves and him: we divide a heart, of which he is the sovereign master by so many titles. We obstinately cherish inclinations and passions, small, it is true, but which are displeasing to him, and are injurious to the absolute right which he has to be preferred before all, without reserve; and he punishes us for it, only too justly, by the privation of those favours, of which no man—no angel—can tell the value, or extol sufficiently the marvellous sweetness.

Let us not, however, be discouraged, if our weakness does not allow us to hope to enjoy those ineffable communications with Jesus, which are the portion of chosen souls. Whoever we are, we can, and we ought, to aspire to enter intimately enough into his adorable heart, to enjoy his friendship, to persevere in his grace, to live and die in his holy love. . . . Ah! let us direct our most earnest attention to the avoiding of all that might not only break off altogether, but weaken the sacred ties which unite us to this divine Saviour: may we even employ all our zeal to draw them more closely, day by day, hour by hour; may we die in this holy exercise of a heart truly Christian!

O Jesus, O thou who "so well knowest how to be a friend,"[2] who art so admirable in the effusions of thy love towards hearts which thou findest void of creatures and of themselves, be thou glorified on earth, as in heaven, for deigning so wonderfully to cherish souls who feel themselves so little worthy of thee! Let those, especially, who have had the happiness to "taste and see how sweet thou art"[3] in thy divine favours, unite to sing, with transport, the name and the heart of their adorable Spouse! . . . But may those who can only admire, at a distance, the ineffable

(1) Cant. ii. 14. (2) Life of St. Teresa, ch. xxv.
(3) Ps. xxxiii. 9.

mysteries of thy love, celebrate, at least, with a lively feeling of gratitude the incomparable goodness with which thou vouchsafest to lend thine ear to the sorrowful accents of their prayers. O Jesus, all good and amiable, we seem to hear thee say from the height of heaven: "I have heard the groaning of the children of *the new* Israel;"[1] "I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sins."[2] O it is by every sigh of our heart that we entreat thee to preserve us from ever offending thee, especially so far as to lose thy grace! And if we were to have this misfortune, we venture to beg of thee beforehand to save us from the fatal consequences which are so often entailed by the privation of thy divine love. How great is the favour which we ask of thee! But it is Mary, our Mother, who carries to the foot of the throne of thy mercy the humble prayers of her children, which our angels present to her, as to their Queen. O preserve us, through her, from all sin; preserve us from the just rigours of thy love, disowned and insulted; preserve us from the unclean Spirit, from all that dishonours man in thy sight; preserve us from all maladies of soul, and from all corporal evils which might injure the soul; preserve us from the thunders of thy justice, from sudden and unprovided death! Vouchsafe, vouchsafe to grant us the grace "to be *ever* thine, whether we live, or whether we die."[3]

DIVINE JESUS, HEAR US!

Christe, audi nos!

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(1) Exod. vi. 5. (2) 2 Paralip. vii. 14.
(3) Rom. xiv. 8.

MEDITATION V.

CHRISTE, EXAUDI NOS!

It is not enough to have said to Jesus, *Hear us;* the Church repeats the adorable name of Christ, and adds, *graciously hear us!* Why repeat a name which has just before been uttered? Because a name so sweet and precious, a name of help and consolation, a name of benediction and salvation, will be said and said again, without danger of wearisomeness or disgust, and the more it returns to the ear and the heart, the more does it bring with it of unction, sweetness, and delights inexpressible. Because, moreover, unhappy, degraded children, as we all are since the fall of our first father,—unhappy exiles, unhappy voyagers on an ocean so exposed to tempests, so full of rocks, so fruitful in shipwrecks,—could not too much have recourse to a name so powerful. Ah! when we believe, when we know that "there is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved;"[1] that at this name every knee bows "in heaven, on earth, and under the earth;"[2] that in this name the apostles, in former times, worked the greatest miracles;[3] that still, every day, marvellous effects are wrought in the name of Jesus Christ, by the sacraments, which, though invisible, are no less admirable prodigies, we cannot but find happiness in pronouncing and invoking this divine name. We derive from this invocation a profound feeling of relief and joy, a mild light which guides us securely through the shades of this life, a firm courage, a persevering energy against all the enemies of our salvation. For the name of the Spouse of the Canticle "is as oil poured out;"[4] "it gives light," says St. Bernard, "it feeds and softens, it fortifies, it even saves the soul from despair."[5]

(1) Acts iv. 12. (2) Phil. ii. 10.
(3) Acts iii. 6. (4) Cant. i. 3.
(5) Serm. xv., *super Cantica.*

But why say to Jesus Christ, "Graciously hear us?" Had not the words, *hear us*, as we have seen, their sweetness and their charms? Would they have lost them by passing twice over our lips? . . . . No, certainly; but the Church would insinuate that Jesus seems at times to hear us, to listen to us, without being willing to answer our petitions. He defers, in certain circumstances, granting us the object of our requests, however humble and fervent they may be, in order to animate our faith more and more, to inflame our ardour and our zeal, to procure for us the great merit of perseverance. And as we are too often tempted to discouragement in such trials, we beseech Jesus to deliver us from this danger. O let us then earnestly entreat this Mediator, so good, so benevolent, so devoted as he is to our welfare, to "make haste to help us."[1] If nevertheless it should enter into the adorable views of his providence to subject us to the holy trial of delay, with respect to the success of our petitions, let us entreat him with no less earnestness, to grant us the grace of perseverance in prayer, which is so precious. Discouragement, indeed, is injurious to the goodness and infinite mercy of God, to the truth of his promises, to the infinite merits of Jesus, of the efficacy of which we seem to doubt, when we leave off imploring the Lord, if we do not obtain so soon as we would. Perseverance, on the contrary, in fidelity, in prayer, even when God appears deaf to all the groanings of our heart, is a noble homage paid to his perfections. It makes us adore his goodness, his mercy, his infallibility, when they seem to hide themselves from us; his wisdom and his providence, when their ways are the most inexplicable, with as much faith as if they became as it were visible in the success of our petitions. It makes us, moreover, rest all our hopes upon the infinite merits of our Saviour, when they seem to have no longer any efficacy in our regard, with as much firmness as if we felt the powerful effects of them.

O Jesus! who to make us sensible of the plenitude of thy mercy, didst become "our advocate with the Father,"[2] do not

(1) Ps. lxix. 1. (2) 1 St. John ii. 1.

permit us ever to cease to implore thee, though our prayers should appear to us to be of no avail. Grant, rather, by thy all-powerful grace, without which we cannot even "pronounce thy name,"[1] that we may redouble our ardour and confidence, when thou delayest to hear our voice. O thou whose tender mercy has vouchsafed to represent itself to us under the affecting image of the mother "who gathers her chickens under her wings,"[2] confidence moves us to pour into thy adorable heart our pains and our sorrows, our evils and our supplications. O may perseverance ever attach us firmly to it, by the intercession of thy divine Mother! It is by her sacred hands that we present to thee all our requests; it is through her that we hope to obtain that we may not cease to pray, till she shall say to our good angels, "the Lord hath heard me,[3] *in favour of my faithful supplicants;* go, ye swift angels,"[4] carry the blessings of my Son to those who cease not to repeat to him—

CHRIST, GRACIOUSLY HEAR US!
Christe, exaudi nos!

MEDITATION VI.

PATER DE CŒLIS DEUS, MISERERE NOBIS!

RELYING on the all-powerful merits of Jesus Christ, and intimately united to him as our divine Mediator, by the preceding supplication, we can, and we ought to, implore with renewed confidence, the most holy and most august Trinity.

The Church makes us invoke, in succession, the three adorable Persons, beginning with the first, to whom she directs us to say, "God the Father of heaven, have mercy on us!"

(1) 1 Cor. xii. 3. (2) St. Matt. xxiii. 37.
(3) Deut. ix. 19. (4) Isa. xviii. 2.

Of heaven . . . Is not God upon earth as well as in heaven? Does he not fill the universe with his presence and his majesty? Did not the royal prophet, soaring on the wings of faith and love, find it equally present, equally adorable "in heaven, in hell, in the uttermost parts of the sea, in the broad light of day, and in the darkest night?"[1] . . . . O without doubt, God is everywhere present. He is so by his knowledge, for he sees and knows all. He is so by his power, for in every place he has only to will, and instantly whatever he wills is accomplished: even nothingness at once obeys him. He is so by his essence, for he is infinite, and the infinite knows neither measure, nor distance, nor any limit whatsoever. "In him we live, move, and be."[2] He surrounds us, he penetrates us with his knowledge, his power, his invisible essence, as the sun surrounds and penetrates the crystal with its impalpable rays. Woe be to us, then, if we were in our thoughts to banish him, in a manner, to heaven, as to some distant palace, to which we should have to make the voice of our prayers reach! We should fall into a capital error, and by thus isolating God from this sad earth, we should render our unhappy situation as children of Adam worse than it is in reality.

No, certainly, God is not far from us: he is in us, and we are in him. No effort is required to make our prayers and the sighs of our exile ascend to him: he whose mercy we implore is more present to us than we are to ourselves. May we never forget him! . . . .

Why, then, once more, why these words, "God the Father *of heaven?*" . . . O it is because in heaven God has prepared for his elect a delightful abode, a lasting country, an eternal kingdom, where, without being more present there than elsewhere, he manifests his adorable presence to the angels and saints. There he makes himself seen by them, for it is written, "we shall see him as he is;"[3] that is, in his beauty, in his truth, in his sanctity, in his goodness, in his power, in his love, in all his perfections.

(1) Ps. cxxxviii. 8, 9, 12. (2) Acts xvii. 28.
(3) 1 St. John iii. 11.

Here below, nothing can satisfy our desires; however fortunate, according to the world, our lives may be, however multiplied, however varied may be our enjoyments, our exile is always felt in some way or other. Besides, to the greater part of men, is not almost the whole of life a tissue of fatigues, of wearisomeness, of disgust, of vexation, and of all kinds of suffering? . . .

Thus, we all more or less sigh, we all more or less eat bread bitter and moistened with tears. If, then, the gratuitous goodness of God were to offer us only natural happiness after this life, O we should be bound to bless him for ever for it, we should be obliged to seek after this happiness with the greatest eagerness. To be eternally exempt from all the evils of this world, to be eternally out of the reach of want, of sickness, of sorrow, of all mourning, of all pain, of all sadness, would this not of itself be too much, far too much, for miserable and guilty creatures? . . . But, O prodigy of goodness! God is generous to us to that degree, as to call us to a supernatural felicity, to a happiness to which our nature bears no proportion, which is incomprehensibly higher than all the soarings of our heart, and all the dreams of our imagination, to a happiness which is nothing less than to be "made partakers of the divine nature."[1] How can we help esteeming, how can we help desiring ardently and immeasurably such happiness? How can we esteem and desire it without being under the most lively apprehension of not fulfilling, with sufficient fidelity, the conditions which are imposed upon us for obtaining it? How, then, can we help crying out to God, with all the powers of our soul, "God the Father of heaven, have mercy on us!" "O Father, who hast predestined us into the adoption of children through Jesus Christ,[2] *and hast so loved us as to make us* heirs indeed of God, and joint heirs with Christ,[3] vouchsafe to enlighten the eyes of our heart, that we may know what is the hope of *thy* calling, and what are the riches of the glory of *thy* inheritance in the saints."[4] May the sight of this inheritance,

(1) 2 St. Peter i. 4. (2) Ephes. i. 5.
(3) Rom. viii. 17. (4) Ephes. i. 18.

where thou dost "inebriate us with a torrent of *divine* delights,"[1] inspire us with the ardour, courage, and strength necessary to "run in the race, so that we may obtain the prize[2] *and* the crown of life promised to those that love thee![3] *And you, O Mary!* show us, by the effects of your protection, that you are the daughter well-beloved."[4] We delight in offering to you this homage of the pious faithful: *Hail, daughter of God the Father!* You are such by a title infinitely more precious than the other daughters of Eve, O you Mother of the "Word made flesh;"[5] and while you were still upon this earth, you could have said to him, with a thousand times more confidence than all of us his adopted children, "Our Father, who art in heaven." Grant, then, O Mary, that by your happy intercession, we may address to him this humble prayer, O Father, who art God of heaven, "the throne of thy glory,"[6] have mercy on us!

Pater de cœlis Deus, miserere nobis!

MEDITATION VII.

FILI REDEMPTOR, MUNDI DEUS, MISERERE NOBIS!

THIS invocation of the Son of God, "consubstantial with the Father, true God of true God,"[7] recalls to the soul of the Christian the great mystery, the ineffable mystery, of the redemption of the world; a mystery ineffable in itself, ineffable in its marvellous effects.

It is, then, true, that since the redemption wrought on Calvary, the salvation of man is found secured by the death of a God. He who did not fear to lower himself too much "by being made

(1) Ps. xxxv. 9. (2) 1 Cor. ix. 24.
(3) St. James i. 12. (4) Gen. xxiv. 23.
(5) St. John i. 14. (6) Isa. lxvi. 1.
(7) Nicene Creed.

flesh,"[1] has not thought himself making too great a sacrifice by suffering and dying for us, the most cruel and ignominious death. O how truly, then, have we "been redeemed at a great price!"[2] But also, how great an esteem ought we to have for our soul! What importance ought we to attach to everything that can enhance its dignity before God, and contribute to embellish its "immortal crown!"[3] And with what ardour and vigilance ought we to avoid all that might be, even indirectly, prejudicial to our salvation!

We were lost, lost for ever:—in consequence of the guilty fall of the first man, we were all struck with an eternal anathema. An expiation was necessary, and an expiation of infinite value, to satisfy the rights of majesty infinitely injured by sin. But who could make this? Could men? No, certainly. Could angels? They are pure, exalted, and sublime; nevertheless, from them to the infinite, there is nothing less than infinity. Our misery, then, was without remedy—without hope. . . . . Yes, if the eternal Son of God had not become "our victim of propitiation."[4] He clothed himself with our nature, and entering into the world, he said to the Most High, "Behold, I come."[5] He took upon himself all "our iniquities;"[6] he gave himself up to be "wounded and bruised for our sins,[7] *in order* that justice and mercy should embrace *in his person*."[8] He even carried his heroic love so far, as to desire, with ardour unequalled, to suffer and die for us;[9] and this burning desire he fulfilled in his passion. O yes, fulfilled: for what is the passion of our Saviour, but a continuation of sufferings of mind and body, a succession of unheard of pains and sacrifices for unworthy and ungrateful creatures? . . . .

In the presence of a devotedness so calculated to excite all our sensibility, to make our hearts beat with the most lively gratitude and the most tender love, let us at first be silent; let

(1) St. John i. 14. (2) 1 Cor. vi. 20.
(3) 1 St. Peter i. 4. (4) 1 St. John ii. 2.
(5) Heb. x. 7. (6) Isa. lxiii. 6.
(7) Isa. liii. 5. (8) Ps. lxxxiv. 2.
(9) St. Luke xii. 50.

us adore, in the silence of admiration, this mystery which enraptures the angels. Then let us contemplate "this great work;"[1] let us study and penetrate, as much as is possible to our feeble understanding, the secret abysses of the mercy and love of our God. Let us lose ourselves in this ocean unfathomable and without shores, and give up our hearts to the pious transports with which it may please God to animate them, and, then, let us admire "the superabundant riches of grace,"[2] of which redemption is the source.

Sanctifying grace, gift sublime and supernatural! It unites in a wonderful manner our soul to God, it communicates to her a divine life, a life which is the beginning of the life of heaven; for St. Paul has said that "grace is eternal life."[3] And this divine life of our soul, which the sacraments are destined to give, to support, to increase, to restore when we have had the misfortune to lose it, itself communicates to all our actions an admirable power, that of meriting a heavenly reward, and of constantly increasing our eternal glory and happiness. Yes, by sanctifying grace we can make of our smallest actions exploits of so great value that each one is preferable to all the treasures of the earth; we can in a moment do more, by one secret act of the will which loves God, than all men together could do in thousands of ages by all their natural powers.

O wonder! wonder! this is all that we can say, O adorable Son of the eternal Father! when we consider the ineffable work of our redemption by thy blood, and the fruits so precious which we gather from it every day. O with how much reason does St. Paul declare to us that thou hast "loved us to excess!"[4] . . . And how much reason have we to exclaim, "The thoughts *of thy love* are exceeding deep?"[5]—too deep for our understanding to fathom; thou art too worthy of praise[6] for our tongues to proclaim it; thou art "greater than our heart:"[7] even with all its love, it

(1) 1 Tim. iii. 16. (2) Ephes. ii. 7.
(3) Rom. vi. 23. (4) Ephes. ii. 4.
(5) Ps. xci. 6. (6) Ps. cxliv. 3.
(7) 1 St. John iii. 20.

could not suffice to repay a love like thine. Thou livest, O divine Redeemer! we know this, and it is the foundation of our hope;[1] thou art "always living to make intercession for us."[2] Do not permit thy blood, the merits of which flow unceasingly upon the earth, to become unprofitable to us through our fault. The voice of this precious blood says to thy Father, "Give me .... my people for which I request,[3] that people which I have 'purchased;'"[4] and Mary says to him with thee, "That people for which I request."[5] Ah, do not permit us to render useless, by the abuse of graces, the efficacy of thy mediation, nor the intercession of her whom we salute with happiness as, *Mother of the Son of God.*

GOD THE SON, REDEEMER OF THE WORLD, HAVE MERCY ON US!

Fili Redemptor, mundi Deus, miserere nobis!

MEDITATION VIII.

SPIRITUS SANCTE, DEUS, MISERERE NOBIS!

"GOD is love,"[6] St. John has said. The Father, then, is love, the Son is love, the Holy Ghost is love. Nevertheless, the operations of Divine love, and, consequently, the operations of grace, whether in our understanding or in our heart, are attributed to the Holy Ghost, though they equally appertain to all the three Persons. The motive is that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and from the Son by way of love, and that he is the substantial and reciprocal love of both.

Thus Jesus said to his disciples that no one "could enter into the kingdom of God without being born again of water and the

(1) Job xix. 25, 27.
(2) Heb. vii. 25.
(3) Esth. vii. 3.
(4) 1 St. Pet. ii. 9.
(5) Esth. vii. 3.
(6) St. John iv. 16.

Holy Ghost;"[1] that the *graces of this divine Spirit* should "flow from the heart of the believer, like rivers of living water."[2] And the great apostle teaches us that "the charity of God is poured abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to us;"[3] that he is "the Spirit of wisdom and revelation;"[4] that it is he who renovates us,[5] that he "helpeth our infirmity, and asketh for us with unspeakable groanings."[6]

Ignorant and incapable as we are, with what ardour should we beg of the Holy Spirit that "burning and shining"[7] light which disperses the clouds of the understanding, and animates and inflames the heart! With what ardour we ought to beseech him to make us judge of all things, "not in carnal wisdom,"[8] but according to the wisdom of the Gospel; to direct and support our will in everything; to render all our conduct supernatural; for this is the distinctive character of the true child of God, of the true Christian; and it is this which makes the difference, wide as heaven from earth, between his thoughts, his affections, his views, his desires, his actions, and the thoughts, affections, views, desires, and actions of the slave of the world.

The true Christian, indeed, thinks of God as of his centre; of heaven, as of his country; of salvation, as of the "one thing necessary."[9] If he has any attachment to creatures, it is in God and for God: to him alone does he attach himself, as to his sovereign good, like a rock which remains unshaken amid the boisterous waves of time. The worldling, on the contrary, thinks of creatures, forgets heaven and salvation; he seeks his own interest or his pleasure in all those attachments which divide his heart. He desires, he is ambitious of all that passes away and perishes in the twinkling of an eye; he is passionately and foolishly fond of frail goods, "which he thinks to hold fast, and which slip away from him, like frozen water, the poor crystal of

(1) St. John iii. 5.
(2) St. John vii. 38, 39.
(3) Rom. v. 5.
(4) Ephes. i. 17.
(5) Titus iii. 5.
(6) Rom. viii. 26.
(7) St. John v. 35.
(8) 2 Cor. i. 12.
(9) St. Luke x. 42.

which melts in the hands which press it, and only serves to defile them."[1]

The true Christian and the slave of the world often do the same works, transact the same affairs, and meet with the same accidents; but with intentions and dispositions so dissimilar, but in a manner so unlike—so contrary, even,—that, in the hand of one, it is gold for eternity; in that of the other, a cursed lead which, far from being able to form for him a "treasure in heaven,"[2] can only "precipitate him to destruction."[3]

The one, animated by the Holy Ghost, is guided by the "Holy Spirit;"[4] his whole life has in it something noble, elevated, grand, in close connection with heaven and with God: the other lives only according to a base and corrupt nature, connected with the wicked angel, and his frightful destiny.

O then, let us supplicate, once more, the Holy Spirit to make us act in all things in a manner supernatural, and never to allow us to have the misfortune to "extinguish the Spirit,"[5] or even to "contristate it."[6] Let us say to him, with a sincere resolution to correspond faithfully with all his graces:

O Holy Spirit, source of life, flame of charity, divine unction,[7] guide us into the right way, make us live according to justice;[8] *keep alive within us* that charity which proceeds from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith.[9] *We venture, even, humbly to ask of thee* that "our charity may more and more abound in knowledge and in all understanding, that we may be filled with the fruit of justice,[10] going from virtue to virtue, *till* the God of gods shall be seen in Sion."[11] Vouchsafe to grant us this grace through Mary, to whom we pay honour and respect as to thy *divine Spouse*. She could say to thee, when the august mystery of the Incarnation was accomplished: "God hath endowed me with

(1) Funeral Oration of Ann of Gonzaga, by Bossuet.
(2) St. Matt. vi. 20.
(3) Tim. vi. 9.
(4) Gal. v. 2.
(5) Thess. v. 19.
(6) Ephes. iv. 30.
(7) Hymn *Veni Creator*.
(8) Ps. cxlii. 10, 11.
(9) 1 Tim. i. 5.
(10) Phil. i. 9, 11.
(11) Ps. lxxxiii. 8.

a good dowry."[1] Thou couldst proclaim her "full of grace:[2] One is my dove, my perfect one is *but* one;[3] how beautiful art thou, my love,"[4] and how justly may her mother call her "blessed of the Lord!"[5] In the name of this holy Virgin, the object of thy predilection:

GOD, THE HOLY GHOST, HAVE MERCY ON US!
Spiritus Sancte, Deus, miserere nobis!

MEDITATION IX.

SANCTA TRINITAS, UNUS DEUS, MISERERE NOBIS!

THE adorable mystery of the Holy Trinity, "one and indivisible,"[6] is the foundation of our religion, the source of all other mysteries, and of all the divine mercies; therefore the Church, after making us invoke in succession, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, directs us to say: "Holy Trinity, one God, have mercy on us!"

A day will come, if we are faithful, when we shall see without obscurity what we now believe, and when the adorable Trinity will unveil to us his ineffable secrets. Then we shall understand how the Father, by the knowledge of himself from all eternity, necessarily engenders "his own image,"[7] who is the Son. How this knowledge being absolute and indivisible, as well as his substance, he communicates this to his Son without division and without reserve. We shall understand how, from the eternal union of the Father and the Son, proceeds necessarily their mutual love, which is the Holy Ghost; how this union, being in like manner absolute and indivisible, "the Holy Ghost proceeds

(1) Gen. xxx. 20. (2) St. Luke i. 28.
(3) Cant. vi. 8. (4) Cant. iv. 1.
(5) Ruth iii. 10. (6) Brev. Rom.
(7) 2 Cor. iv. 4.

from it with the same perfection which the Son receives from his Father."[1]

But the clear visions of heaven are not made for the earth: our country cannot be found in exile. "Till the day break, and the shadows retire,"[2] and the day of a happy eternity dawns, till a holy death come and rend the veil of faith, and we know God "even as we are known,"[3] let us humbly adore, with all our mind, the mystery which he has been pleased to reveal to us; let us praise him and bless him with all our heart, for having thus vouchsafed to make us partakers of the divine knowledge, and admit our poor understanding even into the eternal sanctuary of "inaccessible light."[4] What an infinite honour has he done us, by communicating with us, in the place of trial, in the darkness of exile, a truth which dazzles even the angels, and which gives us cause to "long and faint for the courts of the Lord,[5] where we shall enjoy a sight so glorious!"[6] Unity in Trinity, Trinity in Unity, how great a wonder! Unity of nature in Trinity of Persons, Trinity of Persons in Unity of nature, what admirable concord, what rapturous harmony! "There is there," says St. Augustin, "something ineffable, which cannot be explained by words, that there should be number, and not number. For see if there does not appear, as it were, a number, Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost, the Holy Trinity. If three, what three? The number fails. Thus God neither recedes from number, nor is he contained in number. Inasmuch as there are three, there is, as it were, number: if you ask what three, there is not number."[7]

O unity, so inviolable that number cannot divide it! O number so well ordered that unity makes no confusion in it! How magnificent is the hope of beholding thee one day "face to face!"[8] And, in the meantime, how sweet it is to be able to

(1) Serm. on the Holy Trinity, by Bossuet.
(2) Cant. iv. 6. (3) 1 Cor. xiii. 12.
(4) 1 Tim. vi. 16. (5) Ps. lxxxiii. 3.
(6) Serm. sur la Sainte Trinité. (7) In Joan. Tract., xxxix. n. 4
(8) 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

adore thee with the divine certainty of faith, and to bless thee for the supernatural union which thou givest us with thee in the Christian religion!

The Father, by his adoption, elevates us to the sublime dignity of children of God; the Son, by the Incarnation and the Redemption, "gives us fellowship"[1] in a wonderful manner, with the divine nature; the Holy Ghost, by the "charity which he pours abroad in our hearts,"[2] establishes between God and us an admirable "communication."[3] O may we estimate, at their just value, these divine relations, and esteem ourselves according to the nobility and grandeur of our dignity! May we well understand that God, having so highly exalted us, all that is not God is beneath us; that having the inexpressible honour to be the "sons of the Father,[4] the brethren of the Son,[5] the temples of the Holy Ghost,"[6] we ought in all things to respect ourselves as belonging to "a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people, that we may declare his virtues, who hath called us out of darkness into his admirable light!"[7]

O Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, "one in substance,"[8] *to thee*, "the only God, ... be glory and magnificence, dominion and power, before all ages, and now, and for all ages of ages: Amen;"[9] to thee, who hast honoured us with the revelation of thy eternal essence; to thee, who hast raised us to a superhuman dignity, the perfection of which, in heaven, will be "to be transformed into thy image."[10] O before "the breadth, and length, and height, and depth"[11] of thy love for us, what, alas! can we do but lisp, with the prophet, the accents of admiration and praise,[12] and unite with Mary, who herself enraptured with the "great things which thou hast done in her,"[13] contemplates thee

(1) 1 St. John i. 3.
(2) Rom. v. 5.
(3) 2 Cor. xiii. 13.
(4) 1 St. John iii. 1.
(5) St. John xx. 17.
(6) 1 Cor. vi. 19.
(7) 1 St. Pet. ii. 9.
(8) 1 St. John v. 7.
(9) St. Jude 25.
(10) 2 Cor. iii. 18.
(11) Ephes. iii. 18.
(12) Jerem. i. 6.
(13) St. Luke i. 49.

in an ecstasy of gratitude and love! We adore thee as the *Alpha*,[1] the eternal beginning of all things; we reverence her as the first of thy creatures, and approaching the nearest to thee by the perfections which thou hast given to her, and by the sublime relations of daughter, mother, and spouse with which thou hast honoured her. Permit us then, entreating thee, by her mouth so pure, to keep us always faithful, always worthy of thee and of our magnificent title of Christians, to say to thee,—

HOLY TRINITY, ONE GOD, HAVE MERCY ON US!
Sancta Trinitas, unus Deus, miserere nobis!

MEDITATION X.

SANCTA MARIA, ORA PRO NOBIS!

THE first title of honour which we give to the most Holy Virgin, when we invoke her, is her own name of Mary, a name which, next to that of Jesus, constitutes the delight of pious souls.

What more sweet than the name of a mother, and of a mother alike tender and august! A mother! Is there anything so precious in nature, anything that dilates the heart like her presence, anything that moves it like the recollection of her? A mother! O in this world God has created nothing similar in goodness, in pure and sweet affection, in devotedness, in sublime heroism of the heart. When, then, we have the happiness to be animated with a lively faith; when we firmly believe that Jesus is our divine brother; that Mary, his divine mother, is also ours; that she necessarily extends to us that inexpressible tenderness with which she is filled for the "blessed fruit of her womb,"[2] for that Jesus, who has loved us so much, what pious emotions,

(1) Apoc. i. 8. (2) St. Luke i. 42.

what sweet sentiments, must the name of such a Mother excite within us!

But what admiration, and what joy must also the mysterious sense of this name, a thousand times blessed, inspire us with! It signifies at once *Sovereign*, *Radiant Star*, *Queen of the Sea*;[1] .... and who but Mary can lay claim to these affecting qualifications? *Sovereign:* was it not she who had the honour to give birth to the "King of kings, and the Lord of lords;"[2] him, to whom belong "magnificence, and power, and glory, and victory;" in whose hand is "greatness, and the empire of all things,"[3] and who, glorifying her in heaven, has given her a power of intercession with himself, which has no parallel? *Radiant Star:* was it not she who gave to the world him who is the "true light"[4] of men, the "sun of justice,"[5] the divine focus of which, without aurora and without twilight, without east and without west, incessantly displays the fulness of its inexhaustible radiance? Is it not she who shines with the brightness of the purest and most perfect virtues; with the splendour of a miraculous virginity, and with a glory before which that of the angels and saints is eclipsed? *Queen of the Sea:* is it not she whose admirable example, like a heavenly beacon, overrules the turbulent waves of this life, and guides to the port of a happy eternity those who do not lose sight of her benevolent light? Is it not she, who has received of God, we may say, the power of dispersing, at her pleasure, the storms and tempests, the rage of which so often comes to beat upon our frail little vessel, and which the pious invocation of her sacred name appeases and reduces to silence?

Doubtless, the name of Mary is not "strong and mighty,"[6] in comparison with that of Jesus, except in that inferior degree which necessarily distinguishes even the most perfect creature from her Creator and her God; nor has it any virtue, but through Jesus Christ himself. But it has pleased this divine Son to

(1) Lexic. bibl., Weitenader.
(2) 1 Tim. vi. 15.
(3) 1 Paralip. xxix. 11, 12.
(4) St. John i. 9.
(5) Mal. iv. 2.
(6) Ps. xxiii. 8.

display his glory by his august Mother, and to communicate the marvellous efficacy of his adorable name to that of Mary. Like that of Jesus, the name of this divine Virgin fortifies and consoles. "In dangers," says St. Bernard, "in troubles, in doubts, think of Mary, invoke Mary. Let her not depart from your lips, let her not retire from your heart. . . . . Following her, you will not go astray; praying to her, you will not despair; thinking of her, you will not fall into error; when she supports you, you do not fall; when she protects you, you do not fear; when she leads you, you are not weary; when she favours you, you arrive at the end in safety; and thus you experience in yourself how justly it is said,—*and the Virgin's name was Mary*."[1] Like that of Jesus, this name, sweet to our hearts, puts to flight the spirit of darkness. "If the winds of temptation arise," says the same holy doctor, "call upon Mary."[2] It was of her, that, in the beginning, God said to the instigator of the revolt of Adam and Eve, those words so energetic—"She shall crush thy head;"[3] and this oracle resounds anew, like a clap of thunder to Satan, whenever the Christian soul invokes the name of the most Blessed Virgin.

O Mary! blessed be the Lord, who has so glorified thy name, "that thy praise shall not depart out of the mouth of men!"[4] O tell to our mind and to our heart "by what name thou art called;"[5] enable us to comprehend its dignity, sweetness, and power; penetrate us thoroughly with that respect, confidence, and love which it deserves. It is admirable to piety as "a plentiful olive-tree, fair, fruitful, and beautiful;"[6] it is precious to it as a vase, "smelling sweet of the best ointments."[7] Piety esteems it so much, that when she invokes it, she imagines that she sees the fallen angel take flight, compelled to leave behind him this homage—"Terrible is the name of *the Virgin!*"[8] O Mary! may this sacred name be ever terrible to hell in our

(1) Homil. 2, super Missusest. (2) Ibid.
(3) Gen. iii. 15. (4) Judith xiii. 25.
(5) Gen. xxxii. 29. (6) Jer. xi. 16.
(7) Cant. i. 3. (8) Ps. cx. 9.

favour; may it be to all the enemies of our salvation, "terrible as an army set in array!"[1] May we never separate it in our hearts from the adorable name of thy divine Son, and after that of Jesus, may it be our refuge and our shield, our strength and consolation! It is in the confidence of obtaining this grace, that we say to thee with the Church,—

HOLY MARY, PRAY FOR US!
Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis!

MEDITATION XI.

SANCTA DEI GENITRIX, ORA PRO NOBIS!

A SIMPLE virgin of the tribe of Juda *Mother of God!* . . . how great a wonder! What grandeur and majesty are included in this title, what honour and glory, what incomparable magnificence!

In the general opinion of men, the dignity of a mother is in proportion to that of her son. What then must be the dignity of Mary, who gave birth to the adorable humanity of the eternal Son of God! . . . . If she had brought forth an illustrious saint, she would be, doubtless, very honourable in our eyes; she would be more so if she had brought into the world an incarnate angel; and much more still, if it had entered into the counsels of God that the first of the "chief princes"[2] of heaven should be "made flesh"[3] in her chaste womb. But, Mary Mother of God! who can ever sufficiently esteem, sufficiently comprehend, and adequately declare the elevation of the most Holy Virgin? and who, penetrated with lively faith, will not willingly exclaim with the angel of the schools,—"that this title has made her something infinite, by reason of the infinite good that is in her son;"[4] and

(1) Cant. vi. 3.
(2) Dan. x. 13.
(3) St. John i. 14.
(4) St. Thomas iii. p. q. 25, a. 6 ad 1.

with St. Peter Damian,—"that there is enough to make us remain dumb with astonishment and admiration, to make us not dare to lift up our eyes before the brightness of such a dignity?"[1]

God possesses infinite power: whatever wonders he produces, he can always produce new and greater. And yet let us not be afraid to say that, all-powerful as he is, he could not make Mary more noble, or greater than he has made her in her dignity of Mother of God. Could he, in fact, give her a Son more noble and greater than him, who "thought it no robbery to be equal with God,"[2] and who has said, "I and the Father are one?"[3] Could he give her a son superior to himself? . . . . Mary, then, enjoys, by the divine maternity, all the dignity that is possible in a mother; and even, as the Creator could not make a man greater than the Man-God, so he could not make a mother more august and more honourable than her, who is able to say to this Man-God, "Thou art my Son."[4]

O let us admire, praise, and exalt this masterpiece of the divine omnipotence, this accomplished work of the adorable wisdom of the Most High. He might have wrought the ineffable mystery of the Incarnation, without giving a mother to the human nature of his Son. But was it not congruous that the divine Person who was to repair the fault of man should be the "Son of Man,"[5] at least by his mother, that so it might be one of us who should pay for us all that infinite satisfaction due to the eternal justice? And besides, Adam and Eve having both disgraced themselves, and by their fall involved all their posterity in the same loss, does it not seem right that each sex should have its share in concurring to the restoration and salvation of the human race? The divine wisdom has, then, admirably provided for the work of Redemption in creating a Mother of God. Through Mary the sex of Eve has given to the world its Saviour; and through that Saviour has that of Adam redeemed the world.

(1) Serm. de Nat. B. M. V. (2) Phil. ii. 6.
(3) St. John x. 30. (4) Heb. i. 5.
(5) St. Luke xxix. 10.

But God has done yet more. He has favoured us with "a continual and perpetual extension of the mystery of the Incarnation. This is the language of the fathers of the Church."[1] In the participation of the mystery which supposes all others, the adorable Eucharist, have we not the infinite honour to contract with God that union which approaches the nearest to that of Mary with her Son Jesus, to that of the Word with his human nature, since "we are there really incorporated with the divine flesh of Christ,"[2] and since Jesus himself has said, "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood abideth in me, and I in him!"[3] O let us be confounded here before the Lord, that a favour so prodigious should leave us cold, lukewarm, and indifferent, instead of inflaming our hearts, and exciting within us a zeal and devotion unbounded!

O Mary! we are happy to proclaim with the Church, that you are truly *Mother of God.* We acknowledge, with joy, that you "brought forth" that "first-born Son,"[4] called, by St. Paul, the first-born of those who are "made conformable to the image of his Son;"[5] that it is you, and you alone, who have the right to apply to yourself literally those sacred words, "He that made me, rested in my tabernacle;"[6] and that, as the eternal Father says to his Son,—"Before the day-star I begot thee,"[7] so you may say to him yourself, "And I too have begotten thee in time." We reverence then, we honour with all our power your divine maternity; we offer you all the homage which your incomparable dignity deserves. Obtain for us, O Mary! to appreciate the admirable participation which your divine Son vouchsafes, in the Sacrament of his love, to give us, in your glory, and in the glory of his adorable humanity:

HOLY MOTHER OF GOD, PRAY FOR US!
Sancta Dei Genitrix, ora pro nobis!

(1) Bourdaloue, sur le T. S. Sac.
(2) St. Chrysost., Hom. 63 ad pop. Antioch.
(3) St. John vi. 57.
(4) St. Matt. i. 25.
(5) Rom. viii. 29.
(6) Eccles. xxiv. 12.
(7) Ps. cix. 4.

MEDITATION XII.

SANCTA VIRGO VIRGINUM, ORA PRO NOBIS!

VIRGIN OF VIRGINS! what title could be more appropriate for her, who, the first in the world, had consecrated the love of holy virtue by the seal of a perpetual vow! A vow so precious in the eyes of Mary, that she did not consent to the ineffable glory of the divine maternity, till after the angel had given her, on the part of God, the assurance that this glory should not be in the least incompatible with the sacred engagement which she had made before the Most High! *Virgin of virgins!* what title could better express the pious admiration of the Church for her virginity miraculously perpetual? But also what emblem could have better figured the favourite virtue of Mary and that magnificent privilege, than that lily stem, the triple flower of which so well tells us that she was a virgin in giving birth to the divine Jesus, virgin before, and after that august mystery!

The lily! Is there a flower with a sweeter perfume, a purer brightness, a whiteness more delicate? There is, therefore, no more perfect symbol of the fairest, the most exquisite of virtues; of that angelic virtue, the triumph of which shines forth in the Virgin of virgins, on the day itself of the Incarnation of the Word, when the angel said to her, to give her confidence, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee!"[1] Thus, also, the Holy Scripture represents to us, under the image of a "girdle of lilies,"[2] the inviolable chastity of the Spouse of the Canticles, and the predilection of the heavenly Spouse for virginal purity, when it tells us that he is "the lily of the valleys, that he feeds among the lilies."[3]

From these delightful figures, there flows for us an expressive

(1) St. Luke i. 35. (2) Cant. vii. 2.
(3) Cant. ii. 1; vi. 14.

and sweet instruction. It is that Jesus loves to repose in those that are "clean of heart;"[1] that he loves to remain united to souls whose pure thoughts, pure desires, pure affections and movements are in his sight as a garden "bed of aromatical spices."[2] And in consequence it is given to us to perceive how much the divine Saviour must have been pleased with Mary, whose purity of spirit, truly perfect, was heightened by another miraculous purity, so that the very name of this double virtue is become her own proper name, and that she alone is called pre-eminently the Virgin!

But, let us sound our hearts; are we a holy object of complacency to that divine Lamb whom "virgins follow whithersoever he goeth?"[3] . . . Alas! without sinking into the mire of vice, do we never indulge in anything offensive to his adorable eyes? How many imprudent, or even dangerous looks! How many liberties, which without going beyond the strict limits of virtue, shock the holy severity of a chaste delicacy! How many thoughts, recollections, regrets perhaps, desires, projects, imaginations, which are far from having as their emblem the shining whiteness of the lily! How many words which are far from breathing the "sweet odour of Jesus Christ,"[4] the Son of a Virgin, a virgin himself, and the tender and intimate friend of St. John, "because," says the Church, "he wore the crown of virginity undefiled!"[5] In fine, how many affections, of which God is neither the principle nor the object; how many attachments formed, without our being willing to own it to ourselves, less by the spirit than by the flesh! . . . . O let us banish, let us courageously banish from our heart, not only all that could offend the divine Son of Mary, but all that would be disagreeable to him! Let us respect our "bodies as the members of Christ,"[6] and never make any but a holy use of them. Let us remember that where the eye of man does not see or cannot reach, the eye of God both

(1) St. Matt. v. 8. (2) Cant. vi. 1.
(3) Apoc. xiv. 4. (4) 2 Cor. ii. 15.
(5) Brev. Rom. (6) 1 Cor. vi. 15.

sees and judges; for "hell itself is without darkness before him, and the abyss without a veil!"[1] Let us bear in mind that his eyes, mild as "those of the dove"[2] for virgin souls, are as "a flame of fire"[3] for those who dare to do before the Creator, what the mere sight of a mortal would make them avoid as reprehensible. O if we understood this well, and if we could not forget it! . . . .

O Virgin of virgins! living miracle of purity, who wert upon earth to the divine Jesus "his dove, his perfect one, the daughters *of Sion* saw thee and declared thee most blessed."[4] The number is infinite of those young virgins, whom your powerful example has led to renounce the world and all its most seductive delusions, to consecrate themselves to God in solitude, or to serve Jesus with unspeakable love in the person of the poor, or to walk in your footsteps, even amidst the cares of the world. The queens, *themselves amid the pomp of courts*, have given you *magnificent* praises,[5] by the sublime virtues which they have practised in your train and under your auspices.

Glory to you, O Mary, incomparable model of that virtue which makes man live like an angel, as if his soul were not bound to corruptible organs. O make us, by your protection, your faithful imitators; make us zealous lovers of the most delicate modesty. It is to have the happiness of resembling you, and of continually meriting the benevolent regards of your divine Son, that we say to you,—

HOLY VIRGIN OF VIRGINS, PRAY FOR US!
Sancta Virgo virginum, ora pro nobis!

(1) Job xxvi. 6. (2) Cant. v. 12.
(3) Apoc. i. 14. (4) 1 Cant. vi. 7, 8.
(5) Cant. vi. 8.

MEDITATION XIII.

MATER CHRISTI, ORA PRO NOBIS!

To say of Mary that she is *Mother of God*, is to reveal to us, in a single expression, all her greatness and all her glory. But to comprehend it well, the human mind must be capable of embracing infinite majesty. This is why the Church, after directing us to invoke Mary under this title, presents her to us here in another character, less difficult for our understanding to conceive.

Is it not true, that a mother will appear to us the more honourable as her son shall be distinguished by more eminent qualities, and shall do nobler and greater deeds for the happiness of his fellow-creatures? . . . . What admirable glory, then, redounds to the most Blessed Virgin, from her being the Mother of Christ! Does not Jesus possess, even as man, all perfections which can belong to his nature? He has received the "unction of the Divinity,"[1] which is personally united to him. "In him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;"[2] in him, all the treasures of the goodness, the meekness, the humility, the patience, the compassion, the most pure and devoted charity; in him, the plenitude of sentiments the most noble, the most elevated, the most delicate, the most generous, the most capable of striking, moving, and ravishing the human heart. . . . . But who shall tell us what he has done for the happiness of those, to whom he has been pleased "to be made like?"[3] Without speaking here of the salvation which he procured for us at the price of his life, with what benefits besides this, has he loaded us! What progress has he caused our human nature to make! What intellectual and moral amelioration has he brought into the world! What a prodigious transformation has he there wrought! Even now Christianity, in a single day, prevents more evil than

(1) Acts x. 38. (2) Coloss. ii. 3.
(3) Heb. ii. 17.

all human laws could do; in a single day it produces more acts of virtue, often sublime, than could have resulted from all the pompous maxims of the philosophers.

To whom is owing the restoration of woman, who was considered formerly and *treated as a mere piece of goods*[1] in the family? Is it not due to the Son of Mary? . . . To whom is due respect for children, the softening down of paternal authority, in former times absolute and often tyrannical? Is it not to the Son of Mary? . . . . From whom came the abolition of slavery; from whom came the august and sacred character with which the servant is clothed in the eyes of the Christian master; from whom have we learnt to behold in all men our real brethren? Has it not been from the Son of Mary? . . . From whom come all the succours, all the consolations, all the good and admirable works, of which our holy religion is the soul and the source inexhaustible? Is it not from the Son of Mary? . . . .

Oh! if the most Blessed Virgin were not the Mother of God, if Christ, her adorable Son, were no more than the greatest of all men, the most signal benefactor of human nature, his mother would still be the most noble, the most august, the most honourable of mothers.

And in the supernatural order of things, what good is there of which Jesus Christ is not the author? Without him, for fallen man there would not be, and there would never have been, either sanctifying grace, or merit for heaven, or any of those actual graces which are so necessary for our weakness. Without him, whether before his appearance upon earth, or since, there would have been no intercourse of love or favour between God and man, none of those sweetnesses so precious to piety, none of those lights so consoling to faith, no gleam of hope for eternity.

But how blind and ungrateful, then, are we, to enjoy all these goods, and yet to love so little the Author of them! Every one of our steps is marked by some favour of Christianity, and we do

(1) De la déchéance de la femme, et de sa rehabilitation par le Christ, par J.-Chr. Debas, Univ. Cathol., t. xxiii.

not think at all of it! At the sight of these gifts so precious, our hearts ought to be more and more inflamed with love for the divine Son of Mary; and so far from it being so, we refuse him that time which belongs to him by so many titles, to employ it in violating his holy laws, acting in opposition to his example, and wilfully offending him. How great is our ingratitude! . . . . O if we have a heart ever so little capable of feeling, let us make amends by our repentance for this ingratitude, and henceforth cease not, for a single instant, to live for him, who ceases not to shower down his favours upon us.

O Mary! who wert able to say to this adorable benefactor, "Thou art my Son;[1] it was I that bore thee nine months in my womb, and gave thee suck . . . . and nourished thee,"[2] what must have been your sentiments, when you had to "wrap up in swaddling clothes the *delicate limbs* of this infant, the firstborn[3] of *all those who by Divine adoption were to be* his brethren!"[4] O without doubt, you poured forth your heart in expressions full of love and admiration; you were happy in giving him continual proofs of devotedness, of consecration, of entire abandonment of yourself. The most ardent words of the Spouse of the Canticle were scarcely adequate to express the holy flames which devoured you, and which made you say, again and again, "My beloved is to me, he shall repose on my heart."[5] Obtain for us then, O Mary, to have a share in your admiration, your gratitude, your love for Jesus, which never ceases to load us with benefits. Do not permit us to be any longer ungrateful, and especially to have the misfortune to be ever so to that degree as deliberately to offend such a benefactor. Yes, we entreat you with all the ardour of our souls, and repeat with the Church,—

MOTHER OF CHRIST, PRAY FOR US!
Mater Christi, ora pro nobis!

(1) Heb. i. 5. (2) 2 Macc. vii. 27.
(3) St. Matt. i. 25. (4) Rom. viii. 29.
(5) Cant. i. 12.

MEDITATION XIV.

MATER DIVINÆ GRATIÆ, ORA PRO NOBIS!

"HAIL! full of grace!"[1] said the heavenly messenger to Mary, who was sent by the Most High to announce to her the sublime mystery of the Incarnation. Words of meaning so profound, that no human intelligence can comprehend them, nor any mouth explain them! *Full of grace!* Who then can measure the abundance, or appreciate the richness of the treasure which she possesses? If it be true that more or less grace is the effect of more or less love which the Lord has for a soul, what soul ought ever to have received so much as Mary, who was more loved by God than any other? . . . . *Full of grace!* O perfect expression: "To others grace is given as by portions," says St. Peter Chrysologus; "to Mary it is given in fulness."[2] Alone, in fact, was Mary called to the threefold dignity of beloved daughter of the Father, beloved Mother of the Son, and beloved spouse of the Holy Ghost; and to this incomparable elevation an incomparable sanctity should correspond; and to produce this unexampled sanctity, was required an unexampled abundance of grace, a plenitude of grace. Thus the angel, wishing to express this wonderful sanctity, which distinguishes Mary among all creatures, did not call her by her name, though that name, as we have seen, is rich in admirable meaning; he saluted her by the very title of "full of grace,"[3] as if to designate her by what best characterised her in the sight of the Most High. But she is, moreover, the Mother of him who is "the God of all grace,"[4] and of whom St. Paul has said, that in him "the grace of God has appeared to all men."[5] How should she who has given such a Son to the world not be entitled to be called *Mother of divine grace*, she above all,

(1) St. Luke i. 28. (2) Serm. 143.
(3) St. Luke i. 28. (4) 1 St. Peter v. 10.
(5) Tit. ii. 11.

to whom this same Son, we may say, has confided the distribution of his favours? For Jesus, from his cross, has given us his Mother in giving her to St. John, who, having alone remained of all the disciples, represented at that time all the faithful;[1] and what the great apostle has said of the gift which the eternal Father has made to us of his Son, we may, in a proportionate degree, say of the gift which the Son has made to us of his divine Mother,—"With *her* how has he not given us all things?"[2] . . . . Thus the holy doctors of the Church are lavish of the most expressive invocations in her honour.

"Be mindful of us, O most Holy Virgin," exclaims St. Athanasius, "who remained a virgin even after childbirth, and return us for these our imperfect praises great gifts from the riches of your graces."[3] "In you, O patroness and mediatrix with God who was born of you," exclaims St. Ephrem, "the human race places its joy; in you alone does he find refuge and security who has full confidence in God;"[4] and in another prayer, "Next to the Trinity, you are the mistress of all; next to the Paraclete, another paraclete; next to the Mediator, mediatrix of the whole world."[5] "Because you are the only hope of sinners," cries out St. Augustin, "through you we hope for the pardon of our sins; through you we expect the heavenly reward."[6] "Mary is the ocean of graces," say of her St. Peter Chrysologus,[7] St. John Damascen,[8] and St. Bonaventure.[9]

She is that fountain through which all graces flow upon the world, as from a spring of living water: "the fountain of gardens,"[10] destined to "water the torrent of thorns,"[11] that is to change our hearts, to cause all virtues to bud forth in them; a fountain so full of grace, that this meek Virgin "has enough," says the evangelical doctor, "to pour out upon all mankind."[12]

(1) Bossuet, Serm. pour la fête du S. Rosaire.
(2) Rom. viii. 32.
(3) De Sanctissima Deipara.
(4) Op. Gr. Lat., t. iii.
(5) Ibid.
(6) Serm. de Annuntiat.
(7) Serm. cxlvi.
(8) Orat. i. de Nativ.
(9) In Specul. v.
(10) Cant. iv. 15.
(11) Joel iii. 18.
(12) P. III. qu. xxvii. Art. 5.

Let us then approach, however great our misery—let us then approach, with a heart dilated, "to the throne of grace,"[1] which the Son of the Eternal has chosen for himself in the womb of the divine Virgin. Let us always implore her aid; in affairs even which seem to us the most hopeless, let us implore her from our inmost souls. "Sure of entering thus," says St. Bernard, "into the views of him who has been pleased that all should come to us through Mary."[2]

O Mother of the "Word made flesh, who *has vouchsafed* to dwell in the midst of us, full of grace and truth,"[3] we hail you, with the angel, "full of grace!"[4] Your divine Son is its source, inexhaustible and infinite, and in fixing in you his first abode among men, he has given you the right to say, "In me is all grace."[5] Your blessed hands are as the happy channel by which this divine treasure is diffused over the whole earth, vivifies all that is sterile, and "makes her desert as a place of pleasure, and her wilderness as the garden of the Lord."[6] To you, then, we desire to have recourse in all our necessities; in you, next to Jesus, we place our confidence for ever; through you it is that we expect from him, all unworthy as we are of his mercy and bounty, the pardon of our innumerable faults, the help so necessary for our weakness and final perseverance.

MOTHER OF DIVINE GRACE, PRAY FOR US!
Mater divinæ gratiæ, ora pro nobis!

(1) Heb. iv. 16.
(2) Serm. ii. de Assumpt. B. M. V.
(3) St. John i. 14.
(4) St. Luke i. 28.
(5) Eccles. xxiv. 25.
(6) Isa. li. 3.

MEDITATION XV.

MATER PURISSIMA, ORA PRO NOBIS!

"It was fitting," says St. Anselm, "that the sanctity of the Virgin Mother should be such, that no greater could be conceived next to that of God!"[1] For otherwise, it must be supposed that it was not God's will that she, for whom was reserved the infinite advantage of being his Mother, should be as far as possible equal to that honour, and that he did not create her sufficiently worthy of a rank which has not, and never will have, an equal in the world. This gave occasion to St. Thomas to write these remarkable words, "There may exist a created being so pure that there could not be any more pure in the works of the Creator; and such was the purity of the Blessed Virgin, of her who never knew sin, either original or actual."[2]

God and sin are incompatible; the opposition between these two terms is absolute and infinite. Therefore we approach to God only by departing from evil, from which also we depart the more as we approach the nearer to the "Holy of Holies."[3] But how can we conceive a created being to have so intimate a relation with God as the Mother of God? How then can we conceive one who should have attained, who should have been able to attain to purity of soul like that of the Blessed Virgin? . . . . Thus the angel of the schools teaches that "the effusion of grace in her was so abundant and so complete, that she enjoyed the most intimate union possible with the divine Author of grace, and thus deserved to receive in her womb him who is the source of grace."[4]

It would not suffice, then, to give Mary the first place in the hierarchy of created beings, even of the most holy. She who comes the nearest possible to God is above them by all the eleva-

(1) De Concept., c. xviii.
(2) 1 Sant. dist. xliv., q. unica, Art. 111 ad 3.
(3) Dan. ix. 24.
(4) III. part. quæst. xxvii., Art. v. ad 1.

tion of her incomparable dignity; she is distinguished from them "as the lily among thorns;"[1] her sanctity is pre-eminent among all the elect, among all the blessed spirits, "as a pillar of smoke of aromatical spices, of myrrh and frankincense, and of all the powders of the perfumer."[2]

While we admire in this august Mother this privilege of singular sanctity with which the Lord has favoured her, let us endeavour to comprehend the necessary hatred which God bears to all that offends his infinite majesty. Sin, whatever be its object and circumstances, is always a violation of the moral order, a real disorder, which God must repel far from him, because he is himself order essential, substantial, necessary, immutable. Sin is a rebellion against God, that sovereign power, that supreme power, that eternal power, who forbids it, and who cannot, without being unjust to himself, leave unpunished in his universal empire any act of rebellion whatever. Sin is an ingratitude against the first, the greatest of benefactors; an ingratitude so much the blacker, as we voluntarily offend him who preserves our lives at the very moment that we abuse them against himself, and as it is impossible for us to offend him without turning one of his benefits against him. But can God do otherwise than infinitely hate ingratitude, which men themselves brand with sovereign contempt? . . . .

Let us not pass rapidly over truths so calculated to inspire us with a holy horror of even the smallest violations of the adorable will of God, so capable of exciting our zeal, our vigilance, our efforts to fly from the smallest evil. Like him "who will not understand that he may do well,"[3] we should be in danger of "falling, and being cast out"[4] by the Lord; or like those "fools who despise wisdom and instruction,"[5] we should deserve to be ourselves "despised"[6] by the Most High, and delivered up to our own reprobate sense. Rather let us meditate on these salutary

(1) Cant. ii. 2.
(2) Cant. iii. 6.
(3) Ps. xxxv. 4.
(4) Ps. xxxv. 13.
(5) Prov. i. 7.
(6) Eccles. vii. 14.

truths, and endeavour to derive from them that pious fear which "neglecteth nothing,"[1] and which has always before it the great maxim of our divine Master, "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in that which is greater; and he that is unjust in that which is little, is unjust also in that which is greater."[2]

O you, whose admirable sanctity is fair as the moon,"[3] it is with all our heart that we say to you, "You are fair, *O Mary*, and there is not a spot in you,"[4] in you, O "house of God whom holiness becometh,[5] tabernacle of the Most High which he hath sanctified."[6] Yes, we all, your cherished children, are happy to contemplate in our august and tender Mother that splendid privilege, before which the Church, ever guided by the Holy Ghost, has solemnly reverted, in declaring to the Catholic world that she had no intention to include you among sinners.[7] Obtain for us, O Mary, to be fully sensible of that hatred which God necessarily has for sin, the disorder of which never dishonoured your beauteous soul; of that horror which we ought to feel for that act of rebellion and ingratitude, even though it went not so far as to produce between God and us the separation of death, which alas! it effects too often. Vouchsafe, by your intercession, to preserve us from it; vouchsafe graciously to hear those who address to you this pious invocation,—

MOTHER MOST PURE, PRAY FOR US!
Mater purissima, ora pro nobis!

(1) Eccles. vii. 19. (2) St. Luke xvi. 10.
(3) Cant. vi. 9. (4) Cant. iv. 7.
(5) Ps. xcii. 5. (6) Ps. xlv. 5.
(7) Concil. Trid., Sess. v. et vi.

MEDITATION XVI.

MATER CASTISSIMA, ORA PRO NOBIS!

Is there anything more noble, anything greater, than that virtue which leaves to the mind all its liberty for good, while it disengages it from the slavery, and, so to speak, from the weight, of the body, which it continually keeps within the law of duty? Thus, in every age, among the most civilized nations, as well as those most brutalized by paganism, chastity has been held in honour![1] It might be said, that, by a sort of instinct, Memphis, Athens, Rome, and the wild huts of America, have felt the pre-eminence of that virtue, which elevates man above his own nature, almost to a level with the pure spirits.

But see with what marvellous splendour chastity shines forth in the divine Mother of Jesus! Although, like all the children of Adam, she was linked to a body passible and mortal, Mary, who had been preserved from original sin, was likewise preserved from the most humiliating consequences of this stain of our birth. Would it have been fitting, indeed, that the Lord, in excepting her from the transmission of the sin of Eve, should have left her that miserable fund of concupiscence which Eve herself, while yet innocent, had not known? . . . . . He would in such case have made of Mary a creature inferior to the companion of the first man in her primitive condition; and the Mother of God would have had to send up to heaven those groanings of the Christian soul: "Unhappy that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"[2] . . . . O what heart, really pious, would not reject such thoughts as unworthy, at the same time, of the Son and of the Mother? "That this sacred flesh, which had given to Christ his virginal body," says St. Augustin, "should have been given up to worms after death, is what I should have

(1) Du Pape, par de Maistre, t. ii. ch. 3.
(2) Rom. vii. 24.

a horror of saying."[1] But if she must have been exempted from the decomposition of the tomb, which, after all, is not in itself evil, how much more ought she to have been preserved by the Lord from every sort of tendency to moral disorder!

Mary, then, was in her body, as far as matter may be compared to spirit, what she was in her soul, all pure, all holy. We may say of her, applying to her literally, what St. Augustin says figuratively of virginity, "that she had in the flesh something that was not of the flesh;"[2] something which partook of the nature of angels rather than of our nature, something superhuman, which made the "King of glory not abhor the womb of a mortal virgin."[3]

But let us not imagine that, though Mary had no combat to sustain, the glory of her chastity was on that account less brilliant. However glorious is danger, when it ends in victory, whatever glory there may be in triumphing in a contest where God is the spectator, the prize, and the crown, it is certainly more honourable to be respected by that impure spirit whose attacks have made the greatest saints groan, and not to experience from him even the smallest attack. Such was, by his nature, the prerogative of the adorable Jesus; such was, by grace, the privilege of his Mother, "whose eye *has always been able to* look down upon her enemies,[4] the *infernal* powers triumphed over *by the cross of her divine Son.*"[5]

As for us, who experience but too often "the evil which is present with us, and the combats *caused by it*,"[6] let us take refuge with filial confidence under the maternal protection of Mary. Let us remember that, however weak we may be, "we can do all things *by the grace of God* who strengthens us,"[7] and that by the intercession of his Mother, we must hope not to be wanting in grace. But let us not reckon upon her protection without taking the precautions and means which faith points out

(1) De Assumpt., t. ix. n. 23.
(2) De Sancta Virginit., t. vi. n. 12.
(3) Hymn *Te Deum.*
(4) Ps. liii. 9.
(5) Col. ii. 15.
(6) Rom. vii. 21, 23.
(7) Phil. iv. 13.

to us: this would be rendering Mary a partaker in our presumption, and our culpable imprudence. "Let us watch and pray."[1] Let us watch strictly over our senses, over our imagination, over the impressions of our heart; let us fly from the very appearance of danger: it is only by flight that chastity ensures victory. Let us pray: "let us pray always;"[2] let us pray, particularly in the moment of danger, "that we enter not into temptation."

O Mary, we bless the Lord that in the instant of your Conception, "your heart and your flesh exulted in the living God;"[3] we bless him that in you were realized, in an admirable manner, those words of the great apostle, that "the fruits of the Holy Spirit are continency and chastity!"[4] What continency can be ever compared to yours? What chastity is there which is not eclipsed before that which God has preserved from all the attacks of concupiscence, and to which, by the power "of the invincible Lion of the tribe of Juda,[5] he has always given the glory to triumph?"[6] . . . . Alas! how very different is our lot, and how formidable to us, for our eternal state, are those "combats which our souls suffer from carnal desires,[7] and the spirits of wickedness in the high places!"[8] In the name of your glory, O Mary, do not permit those who implore your aid, and who combat under the shadow of your protecting power, ever to yield in the conflict! Pray for us, that "the God who brings peace to our hearts may crush Satan under our feet,[9] and that we may mortify by the spirit the deeds of the flesh."[10] Once again,

MOTHER MOST CHASTE, PRAY FOR US!
Mater castissima, ora pro nobis!

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(1) St. Mark xiv. 38. (2) Ephes. vi. 18.
(3) Ps. lxxxiii. 3. (4) Gal. v. 23.
(5) Apoc. v. 5. (6) 2 Cor. ii. 14.
(7) 1 St. Pet. ii. 11. (8) Ephes. vi. 12.
(9) Rom. xvi. 20. (10) Rom. viii. 13.

MEDITATION XVII.

MATER INVIOLATA, ORA PRO NOBIS!

In ancient times, the prophet Isaias, to whom God showed, in a holy vision, seven centuries beforehand, the miracle of the Virgin-Mother, said to the ancestors of Mary, "Hear ye, therefore, O house of David: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bring forth a son, whose name shall be called Emmanuel."[1] This was, indeed, one of those prodigies which God produces from the treasures of his power, when he would impress upon his works a seal to strike men with astonishment and admiration; and that, also, is what the Church would have us honour and praise by this invocation,—*Mother undefiled, pray for us!*

"A virgin has conceived," exclaims St. Augustin, "wonder and admire: a virgin has brought forth, wonder and admire still more—after childbirth she remained a virgin!"[2] St. Bernard enlarges upon the immortal Bishop of Hippo: "If I praise in her virginity, many virgins seem to present themselves to me after her. If I proclaim her humility, there will, perhaps, be found a few, who, taught by her Son, have become meek and humble of heart. If I wish to magnify the multitude of her mercy, there are some men of mercy and women also. There is one thing in which she has seen no one before her, nor will she have any after her,—that is, having the joys of a mother, with the honour of virginity. This is the privilege of Mary; it shall not be given to another: it is singular, but at the same time it is found ineffable."[3]

This prodigy, doubtless, transcends all the laws of nature. But if our first father came into the world by a simple act of God's will, was it any more difficult to that Almighty will to associate, in a mortal woman, "the *divine* fruit of the Holy Spirit,"[4] to the flower of virginity? And, besides, does not the

(1) Isa. vii. 14.
(2) Serm. in Nat. Domini, xiii.
(3) Serm. iv. de Assumpt. B. M. V.
(4) St. Matt. i. 20.

image which the "unspotted mirror"[1] receives and reflects to us, give us sufficiently to conceive how the "brightness of God's glory"[2] could come and be exhibited to the world, in a manner as admirable, as well calculated to astonish our understanding? . . . It seems, moreover, that the Lord would prepare a long time beforehand the mind of man to believe this wonder—the object of our faith; for the solemn prophecy, which had announced him so long before to the people of God, had found an echo among almost all the pagan nations of antiquity: their religious traditions agreed in expecting the Son of a Virgin to be their deliverer.[3] It seems, also, that the mystery of a God-Man, being in itself a miracle unparalleled, its glory should shine forth in his birth, as well as in his conception.

Here let us praise the Lord for the admirable prodigies, by which he has exalted the mystery of his "annihilation in the nature of man;"[4] let us bless him for the glorious favours which he has bestowed on the most Blessed Virgin; and let us endeavour to be more and more penetrated with a high esteem, and a generous love for that virtue, which he has honoured in Mary by such wonders. O if we knew how pleasing this virtue is to "God, who is a spirit, and who must be adored in spirit,"[5] and wills that our flesh, in its degree, shall partake, as far as it is capable, in the elevation, noble nature, and purity of that adoration! . . . . What constant efforts should we make to practise that chastity of the senses, which imposes upon itself the privation even of lawful pleasure, in order not to be exposed to the danger of going beyond it; that chastity of the heart, which excludes every affection that is too sensitive, though it be lawful; that chastity of the imagination, which banishes even the passing thought of anything improper, or any dangerous object! And how carefully should we regulate our whole exterior, so as to inspire others, by our reserve and by our modesty, with esteem

(1) Wisd. vii. 26. (2) Heb. i. 3.
(3) III. Lettre de M. Drach. (4) Heb. i. 3.
(5) St. John iv. 23.

and love for a virtue which alone can render our homage worthy of the most Holy Virgin!

O Mother of inviolable purity, called by the apostle St. John "a great wonder," we love to contemplate you, with him, "clothed with the sun, crowned with twelve stars, having the moon under your feet!"[1] The sun surrounds you with his resplendent brightness: the figure of the divine "Sun of justice,"[2] whom you bore in your chaste womb, and who has rendered your purity unalterable as his own brilliant rays. Twelve stars compose your diadem: the image, by their bright light, of that of your immaculate integrity. You have the moon beneath your feet: an emblem of the triumph of your virginity over all inconstancy, and all imperfection, represented by this orb with its changeable phases. We unite with the pious transports of St. Ambrose, who, on the solemnity of Christmas, made his people sing, "The whole world admires the wonderful parturition of the Virgin. It was fitting that a God should thus be born!"[3] We ardently desire to honour in you the wonders of the Lord, by our fidelity in imitating, as far as our weakness will permit, your superhuman purity. To obtain for us that grace,—

MOTHER UNDEFILED, PRAY FOR US!
Mater inviolata, ora pro nobis!

(1) Apoc. xii. 1.
(2) Mal. iv. 2.
(3) Cited by Pope St. Celestin, Epist. decretal. Rom. Pontif.

MEDITATION XVIII.

MATER INTEMERATA, ORA PRO NOBIS!

To be worthy of God, the splendour of the prodigy of the Virgin-Mother must be unalterable, and the chaste womb in which the "Word was made flesh"[1] must remain for ever incorruptible, as a "sanctuary exclusively reserved for the Lord."[2] Accordingly, it is of faith that Mary was ever a virgin; that nothing ever tarnished "*the flower* of purity, so admirably associated in her with *the fruit of honour* and glory,"[3] but that this same flower, on her last day on earth, was as splendid as at its first dawn. Nay, more, the Church tells us, in her sacred liturgy, that so far from losing any part of its perfection, the virginity of Mary received by the miraculous birth of our Saviour a divine consecration![4] This, then, is that "fountain, *which has ever preserved the pure crystal of its waters by being inviolably* sealed up;"[5] this is truly "that garden enclosed,"[6] which is the inaccessible abode of the Divine Majesty, and before which "the cherubim watch, with a flaming sword."[7]

Even if we had not, in this respect, the certitude which is given to us by the infallible teaching of the Church, where is the faithful soul who does not understand that Mary, by the glory of the divine maternity, became the true temple of the Son of the Eternal? that the increated Word, having dwelt for nine months in her virginal womb, had made it the purest and most august sanctuary? that if "every place where *formerly* the ark of the Lord had reposed, was deserving of solemn homage,"[8] this living sanctuary of the Divinity was incomparably more worthy of it? . . . . But, on the other hand, who would not have a horror of supposing that God could have permitted the profanation "of this tabernacle which he had chosen"[9] for his Son? that Mary could

(1) St. John i. 14.
(2) Ezech. xliv. 2.
(3) Ecclus. xxiv. 23.
(4) Missale Rom. Secret. in Concept. B. M.V.
(5) Cant. iv. 12.
(6) Ibid.
(7) Gen. iii. 24.
(8) Ps. cxxxi. 7.
(9) Ps. cxxxi. 13.

for a single instant cease to respect what God had made so venerable, or that she could ever have forgotten that sacred engagement, of which she had spoken to the angel Gabriel as of a treasure, which she would not have sacrificed for the sublime maternity which was announced to her?[1]

O far be from us, very far from us, thoughts which would not only be contrary to faith, but would accuse Mary of "a sacrilege unworthy of her, and a profanation unworthy of Jesus Christ himself."[2] Rather let us join with the holy doctors, who have celebrated the incorruptibility of her, who is the Virgin by pre-eminence. Let us say, with St. Jerom, "She always remained holy in soul and body, eternally a virgin;"[3] and with St. Ambrose, "Mary is the mistress of virginity, the glory of which suffered no eclipse in her;"[4] and with St. Peter Chrysologus, "By giving birth to the Man-God, her purity only increased, her chastity acquired a fresh lustre, her virginity became only the more inviolable."[5]

But from this truth let us know how to derive a lesson fruitful to our own souls. The holy and adorable Eucharist, as we have already seen, gives us so close and honourable a relation to Jesus Christ, that it bears a wonderful resemblance to that which the divine maternity produced between Mary and the eternal Son of the Most High. Why do we not derive from this ineffable union, this immense honour, a signal confirmation in the love of virtue, an invincible strength against the seduction of the senses? . . . . O it is because we do not sufficiently value, before the Holy Communion, the rich price of the grace which God confers upon us; it is because after it we too soon lose the recollection of the incomparable honour which we have received. When we believe from the depth of the heart,[6] how can we, before partaking of the sacred banquet, say to ourselves without emotion, "It is not for a man, *it is not for an angel*, it is for God himself that I am pre-

(1) St. Greg. of Nyssa, Hom. in Nat. Christi.
(2) Elevat. sur les Mysteres, par Bossuet.
(3) Ep. x. ad Eus. de Ass. In Ezech. i. 13. (4) De Instit. Virg.
(5) Serm. cxlii. (6) Rom. x. 10.

paring a house *within myself!*"[1] And after being thus intimately united to the Man-God, how can we fail "to live in God, by adopting divine sentiments?"[2] After feeding on "that virginal body, that body conceived of a Virgin and born of a Virgin,"[3] how can we consent, unless we lose the remembrance of such a grace, to cease for a single instant to be pure and unspotted?

O Mary! "the new Eden, where purity displays, in full bloom, her fairest flowers,"[4] what praises shall we give to the glory of your inviolable and perpetual virginity? . . . . "Miracle unheard of," shall we say to you, with St. Ephrem, "prodigy inexplicable; bush incombustible; golden censer, from which is exhaled a delicious perfume; thou who alone art most pure of soul and body; alone above all integrity, all innocence, and all virginity!"[5] O may we henceforth, by your protection, delight in the virtue which you "have loved, *and which shall make you* blessed for ever."[6]—"As the wearied hart pants after the fountains of water," so may we long after the adorable mystery, where we taste, with the "corn of the chosen ones—the wine which maketh virgins to spring forth!"[7] May we, above all, when we have had the infinite honour, the inexpressible happiness to partake of it, preserve the remembrance of it ever present, and lead a life "holy and blameless,"[8] under the auspices of her to whom we address this supplication of a heart, alas! but too frail,—

MOTHER UNTOUCHED, PRAY FOR US!
Mater intemerata, ora pro nobis!

(1) 1 Paralip. xxix. 1.
(2) Medit. sur l'Ev., par Bossnet.
(3) St. Basil, Orat. xxx.
(4) St. Ephrem, Op. Gr. Lat., t. iii. p. 524—552.
(5) Judith xv. 11.
(6) Ps. xli. 2.
(7) Zach. ix. 17.
(8) Col. i. 22.

MEDITATION XIX.

MATER AMABILIS, ORA PRO NOBIS!

THE sacred canticle in which the Holy Spirit presents us with the emblem of the alliance of the Word incarnate with his Church, is also a magnificent picture of all those qualities which secure to Mary the title of *Mother most amiable*. In that divine picture, the heavenly Spouse represents her to us in the most varied colours, under images the most exquisite and brilliant: they are flowers, fruits, and plants the most beautiful; they are precious perfumes prepared by art, or the work of nature; comparisons full of grace and sweetness; ornaments of enchanting delicacy, splendour, and charms. But all that belongs to earth is too much beneath that Mother, who is pre-eminently amiable; and behold her saluted by the mouth of the virgins of Jerusalem with this cry of admiration, "Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun?"[1] . . . . Yes, her amiability has the brilliant colours of the first glow of day, the soft brightness of the moon, the rich splendour of the king of the stars; and with justice does St. Epiphanius say to her, with pious enthusiasm,—"Next to God, you are the first beauty: that of the cherubim and seraphim, that of all the choirs of angels is effaced before yours."[2] How much more, then, does it eclipse the charms of Rebecca and Rachel, the striking features of Esther, the majestic grace of Judith, of which nevertheless the Scripture makes honourable mention![3]

But let us not confine ourselves to those terrestrial ideas furnished by the senses: that beauty, that ineffable amiability of the cherished daughter of the King of kings "comes entirely from her soul,"[4] and from all those inestimable gifts with which

(1) Cant. vi. 9. (2) Serm. de laudibus Virg.
(3) Gen. xxiv. 16; xxix. 17. Esth. ii. 7. Jud. viii. 7.
(4) Ps. xliv. 14.

our Lord has adorned her. If men were capable of seeing what a soul is that possesses sanctifying grace, they would find it so beautiful, as to ravish the eyes most indifferent; and if this is the case with every soul who enjoys this precious treasure, how great must be the beauty of those, who, by their fidelity, zeal, and fervour, merit every day, and we may say every moment, an increase of this heavenly gift, this magnificent, divine ornament of the Christian soul! How great an idea, then, must we have of the inward beauty and supernatural amiability of Mary! From her Conception she had received the effusion of grace in a superior degree to that with which all other creatures have been capable of being favoured. The Lord, indeed, in his eternal counsels, having chosen her among all to be his Mother, she must, from the first moment of her existence, have been necessarily more pleasing to him than every other; and not to remain inferior to her incomparable destination, she must have been, on that very account, more than any other, closely fixed on God, and united to him in mind and heart, jealous to increase her treasure, continually, by fresh acts of divine love. No other, then, has been enriched like her, every moment, with fresh traits of supernatural beauty; no other has possessed, like her, the virtues which are inseparable from such an abundance of grace. Never, then, was heart so humble, so patient, so charitable, so compassionate, so obliging; never was heart so generous, so devoted, so pure, so nobly exalted, so great, so nearly approaching to the adorable heart of her divine Son.

Let us here learn to love before all, like Mary, what alone is truly amiable—God, and the means of pleasing him, and being united to him. Let us learn to despise, like her, that outward beauty which is so frail, which fades, loses colour, withers, and at length falls beneath the stroke of death, to give place to something disgusting and hideous. Let us attach ourselves, with all our power, to that inward beauty, that beauty of the soul, which renders us so amiable before God, that every faithful soul dying in the state of grace is associated by him to his glory and happiness. Let us remember, in fine, that by meriting for our

soul the felicity of heaven, we merit it also for our body; and that consequently all that we do in this life for the supernatural beauty of the soul, we do not only for the promotion of its eternal beatitude, but also for that of the glorification of our body for eternity.

O Mary! masterpiece of the Almighty, how ravishing is your beauty in the eyes of faith! Yes, you are worthy to be called by pre-eminence, "Amiable to the Lord,"[1] for you are adorned with all virtues, with all perfections that can render a creature amiable.[2] How sweet it is to us, O cherished Mother, to exclaim with one of your devout servants, "that you carry away the hearts of those who contemplate you!"[3] How sweet it is to us to express to you the sincere desire which we have to love you continually as you deserve, to prefer, like you, the beauty of the soul before any other, and to labour to increase it by the fervour of our charity! Bless this desire, O divine Mary, and, in order to obtain for us its accomplishment,

MOTHER MOST AMIABLE, PRAY FOR US!
Mater amabilis, ora pro nobis!

MEDITATION XX.

MATER ADMIRABILIS, ORA PRO NOBIS!

MAN has wrought out what God has given up to his patient industry, and has produced admirable things. He has, by the happiest efforts of his genius, subjected the most rebellious elements, even light itself, to his intelligent activity; and he has produced astonishing works, worthy to excite the enthusiasm of all who can feel what is beautiful and sublime in the arts. But

(1) 2 Kings xii. 25. (2) Phil. iv. 8.
(3) Medit. in Ant. Salve Regina., attributed to St. Bernard.

what are all the master-works of man, compared with what God has produced by a single act of his almighty will? And what are all the most glorious works of the creation in comparison with *the Mother most admirable?*

God, it is true, has brought forth from the infinite treasures of his power wonders the most striking and diversified; he has scattered them in all space, even as the dust in our fields: he has adorned the earth with creatures, in which are displayed the most astonishing delicacy and strength; he has adorned the heavens with azure, with silver, and gold; he has established in the universe the most profound combination of contrary elements, the most scientific harmony of laws, sublime in their diversity, in their unity, in their stability; he has created man, who is king of all nature, the living abridgment of all the wonders of the world. And yet he has done still more; he has created Mary, *the Mother most admirable;* admirable in her grandeur and in her privileges; admirable in the singular prodigy of her divine maternity; admirable in the august and incomparable influence which has been given to her over the destinies of the human race, and which is proclaimed by her co-operation in our salvation, as well as the very extensive power of her intercession; for all the elements seem to be subject to her: at her prayer the infectious air loses its malignity, the conflagration suspends its ravages, the overflowed waters return to their channel, the barren earth recovers its fertility.

Mary! O she is at once both Virgin and Mother—the amazement of nature confounded by grace; she is the creature and the Mother of the Most High, "the handmaid and Mother of God;"[1] she is the daughter of fallen Eve, and the true Eve, "the true Mother of the living,"[2] Mary! she is the abridgment of the goodness, the charity, the mercy, the power of the Creator; "the abridgment of his incomprehensible perfections," says St. Andrew of Crete.[3] She is, next to God, the centre of the prayers and

(1) St. Luke i. 43. (2) Gen. iii. 20.
(3) Serm. 2, de Assumpt.

praises of the Catholic world; she is, in the eyes of faith, the saint by pre-eminence, inseparable from the God-Man: their names are repeated every day by every mouth; in their honour, both east and west have ever united, and always will unite, their hymns and their homage.

"He that is mighty, *then*, hath done great things"[1] for this incomparable Virgin: he has so wonderfully glorified her in heaven and upon earth, that in the opinion of St. Cyril and St. Bernard, "the most eloquent tongues can utter only imperfect praise when they speak of her pre-eminence."[2]

But ought we here to confine ourselves to a profound sense of admiration for this so perfect work of our Lord? . . . Let us return upon ourselves; let us consider ourselves well with the eyes of faith; is there not also a prodigy wrought in us? Has not God rendered us also truly admirable? "We were by our birth only children of wrath;"[3] and we are become "most dear children,"[4] objects of the love and most tender care of the heavenly Father. Yet more: we mortals, so little and contemptible, are exalted, by grace and by the holy Eucharist, to the sublime life of angels, to the divine life of heaven; we are destined to enjoy eternally the highest glory, the glory of God himself, since it is written that "we shall be like to him,[5] and reign with him for ever."[6] O if we were deeply penetrated with these magnificent lessons of faith, how great and generous would be our sentiments towards the Lord! how much better would our conduct correspond with his favours and the sublimity of our hopes!

You are, O Mary, and you will ever be, worthy of admiration, not only on account of your perpetual and miraculous virginity, prefigured by the prodigy which appeared to Moses "on the mountain of God,"[7] but because of the sublimity of all your privi-

(1) St. Luke i. 49.
(2) St. Cyr. Hom. habita in Nestor. S. Bern. in deprecat. ad B. Virg.
(3) Ephes. ii. 3.
(4) Ephes. v. 1.
(5) 1 St. John iii. 2.
(6) Apoc. xxii. 5.
(7) Exod. iii. 2. Brev. Rom. Offic. Circumcis.

leges, of the superabundance of graces, with which the Lord has filled you, of the incomparable power which he has given you, of the singular glory with which he has invested you. "Wonderful!"[1] that is the peculiar name by which the heavenly Father has been pleased that his divine Son should be called; it is the same which the Church gives to you, as that which approaches the nearest to the adorable greatness of the Man-God, and which best reflects his glory. August object of the "wonder of the mighty and the princes of the earth,[2] *O you*, whose magnificence is wonderful,"[3] make us sensible of the prodigies of greatness to which it has pleased God to exalt even us in this place of exile and probation, of the still more wonderful prodigies of that heavenly glory which he vouchsafes to promise to our exertions; make us worthy, by your intercession, of a destiny so high and magnificent;—

MOTHER MOST ADMIRABLE, PRAY FOR US!
Mater admirabilis, ora pro nobis!

MEDITATION XXI.

MATER CREATORIS, ORA PRO NOBIS!

THE divine act of creation is the greatest, the most astonishing to the eyes of our understanding: in vain does it search and explore the passage from nothing to existence; it is a secret which God has reserved to himself, which will for ever elude the investigations of human reason. God, then, who is so great in so many other ways, shows himself to us, as we may say, in all his power, by his title of Creator of the universe; and the Church, impressed with this truth, directs us here to invoke

(1) Isa. ix. 6. (2) Wisd. viii. 11.
(3) Ecclus. xliii. 32.

Mary, by the name of *Mother of our Creator*, to elevate our minds to the highest idea which we are capable of conceiving of her.

Mother of our Creator! Does it not seem at first, that there is a kind of contradiction between these two terms? What! can the rivulet produce its source? the work, him who has made it? Who ever saw, who ever heard of such things? . . . . Doubtless, if there was only the divine nature in Jesus Christ, this title could not belong to the most Blessed Virgin: the Divinity exists of itself from all eternity, it has no other principle than itself. But "the Word was made flesh,"[1] and Mary, by a miracle unparalleled, became the Mother of his human nature. But, the Word is the Creator, equally with the Father and the Holy Ghost—these three adorable Persons having produced together all creatures by the indivisible act of their will.

Let us then exclaim with St. Peter Chrysologus, "Yes, truly, Mary brought forth into the world Him who created it and brought her herself into the world!"[2] Let us address to her our most eager congratulations, saying to her with the same holy doctor, "Blessed be you for ever! your Creator has been pleased to be conceived in your chaste womb; your first beginning has been pleased to owe his birth to you; your divine Father has deigned to become your Son; your God has vouchsafed to be made flesh in your own flesh."[3]

But for whom has the Creator of all things raised Mary to so great glory? . . . It is for us all: by her he came into the world; he came to effect in each one of us a change more wonderful, perhaps, than the creation. In the beginning, "God said, and *all* was made."[4] What could resist the all-powerful force of his word? But in the admirable operations of "the grace which is given us by Jesus Christ,"[5] God permits our liberty to oppose an obstacle to it, to render us capable of meriting; and thus grace triumphing over our liberty, at the same time that it

(1) St. John i. 14. (2) Serm. 143.
(3) Serm. 142. (4) Ps. cxlviii. 5.
(5) St. John i. 17.

respects it, and allows it to act in a meritorious manner, presents something which might be called greater in a certain sense than the act of primitive creation. This is what St. Paul apparently wishes to make us understand, when he employs the words *new creature* to express the transformation of man by the grace of Christianity. "If then any be in Christ a new creature,"[1] he wrote to the Corinthians; and to the Galatians, that in Christ Jesus nothing availed "but a new creature."[2] Alas! we do not see this *new creature*, and this is why we are but little moved at the admirable act of divine power which produces it. Accustomed as we are, moreover, to know human nature only as transformed in some measure by baptism from the cradle, we esteem the benefit the less from not knowing by experience what it is to grow and advance in life under the fatal influence of original degradation, without a remedy and without supernatural succours. Ah! those pagan converts knew this well, to whom the great apostle said, after displaying before them the picture of the most humiliating fruits of corrupt nature, "Such some of you were, but you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."[3]

Let us then often think what we should have been without baptism, and without so many wonderful aids, the source of which it has opened to us; let us compare ourselves with unbelievers, to whom God "hath not done in like manner,"[4] and we shall give up our hearts without reserve to all those sentiments which the most lively gratitude can inspire.

Vouchsafe to make us understand, O Mary, all the gratitude and love required of us by that prodigious change which the grace of your divine Son operates within us—an unspeakable favour, which makes us pass from the boundaries of our nature to a superhuman state, incomparably more elevated than the most excellent moral condition! Before the benefit of "the laver of regeneration,"[5] and its blessed effects, the value of which cannot

(1) 2 Cor. v. 17. (2) Gal. vi. 15.
(3) 1 Cor. vi. 11. (4) Ps. cxlvii. 20.
(5) Tit. iii. 5.

be expressed, our "heart *should be* inflamed, and *ourselves* brought to nothing;"[1] yet, alas! we are cold, ungrateful, wilful sinners. Permit us not, O Mary, to defer any longer "rendering to God the things that are God's,"[2] and offering to the Creator, whose majesty "rested in your tabernacle,"[3] the sentiments due to him by so many titles: and that henceforth we may be grateful and always faithful,

MOTHER OF OUR CREATOR, PRAY FOR US!
Mater Creatoris, ora pro nobis!

MEDITATION XXII.

MATER SALVATORIS, ORA PRO NOBIS!

THIS is the most affecting title of Mary considered as Mother; this is her title most dear to Christian piety. *Mother of our Saviour!* that is to say, O you, who by your co-operation in the divine Incarnation have given to us him whose name, Jesus, the angel Gabriel formerly revealed to your chaste spouse, "he who should save his people from their sins!"[4] . . . . *Mother of our Saviour!* O you to whom we are indebted for him, whose adorable name every pulsation of our heart should speak and repeat without ceasing, if we had a lively sense of our obligation to your divine Son! To understand well what Mary is to us, let us then well appreciate what this sweet Saviour is in our regard, whom she brought forth into the world.

Two things give value to any service: the importance of its object, and the generosity with which it is rendered. O how precious, then, how truly inestimable is that for which we are indebted of the adorable Son of Mary!

(1) Ps. lxxii. 22. (2) St. Luke xx. 25.
(3) Ecclus. xxiv. 12. (4) St. Matt. i. 21.

What would have been our lot for eternity but for this divine Saviour? The Holy Ghost, in order to describe it to us, calls it "eternal punishment in destruction,"[1] that is a state which shall never have an end, and in which the horrors of death are renewed every moment; hence it is a life imperishable, but deprived of the sovereign good, with an incessant and immense desire to possess it, with the certainty of never obtaining it; an endless life given up to "eternal sufferings."[2] . . . . But, as if it were but little to free us from so deplorable a destiny, Jesus has merited for us the invaluable benefit of "sitting together *one day* in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus,[3] of being glorified with him,[4] of reigning *eternally* with him,[5] of being like to him;"[6] that is of being for ever happy—happy above all human expression, happy beyond all thought, beyond all desire. And this twofold service he has rendered us at the expense of the most disinterested and most magnanimous self-devotion.

What were we in regard to Jesus, that his heart should inspire him with the thought of saving us by his blood? Were we like excellent brethren for whom it is sweet to make a sacrifice? O no, certainly! Were we like beloved friends, whose lot inspires a lively interest? Again, no. Like strangers, at least, deserving of pity for their virtue as well as for their misfortunes? Alas! no—yet once more: we were but miserable, sinful creatures, unworthy of one single sign of regard from him, and from whom he had not to expect the most ordinary gratitude; what do I say? —from whom he was not ignorant that the sole return would be most commonly a deplorable coldness, or even a multiplicity of offences, alas! too voluntary. And yet, he has loved us "unto death, even to the death of the cross."[7] To love, to love even heroically, him who deserves no sympathy; to love him who does not love, and who never will show any just gratitude,—what a love is this! . . . . But to sacrifice oneself for him in whom we

(1) 2 Thess. i. 9. (2) Ibid.
(3) Ephes. ii. 6. (4) Rom. viii. 17.
(5) 2 Tim. ii. 12. (6) 1 St. John iii. 2.
(7) Phil. ii. 8.

find nothing but misery and insensibility, from whom we expect nothing but black and obstinate ingratitude, what love purer, stronger, or more generous can be conceived?

When, then, shall we give up to the love of our Saviour what we owe to him? We who detest those who are ungrateful, when shall we cease to be so? . . . . A man, who at the risk of his own life, should have saved our bodily life, this life so frail, so miserable, so full of bitterness and tears, we should love; to offend him would fill us with horror. Oh! how guilty, then, we are towards the adorable Son of Mary, who, by the most ignominious and cruel of deaths, has delivered us from the most dreadful fate for eternity, and merited for us the most happy eternal lot! But how much more so should we be, if after seriously meditating on truths so well calculated to move our heart, we should still refuse to discharge a debt to him, so sacred on every account! Let us be then henceforth, no longer our own, for "*we* are not *our* own,"[1] but his, who has "bought, with *so* great *a* price,"[2] our love, our fidelity, and self-devotion.

O Mary, your character of Mother of our Saviour associates you to the work of the Redemption of men, effected by his Passion, the sorrowful instruments of which, reminding us of his sufferings and yours, speak so eloquently to every feeling heart. Let love, oh, love ardent, inviolable and eternal be to Jesus! next to Jesus, to you, O Holy Virgin, ardent and faithful love to our latest breath! August and cherished Mother of this divine Son, whose name "Saviour"[3] was revealed by an angel to the shepherds, who were called to visit his cradle and adore his birth, how much more applicable is this title of "Saviour of the world" to him, how much more justly does it belong to him than to Joseph, the saviour of Egypt?[4] Joseph had deserved it by a service rendered to the people of Pharao, but without any personal sacrifice; and Jesus may be said to bear this name written upon his adorable forehead with his own blood. Grant, O Mary,

(1) 1 Cor. vi. 19. (2) 1 Cor. vi. 20.
(3) St. Luke ii. 11. (4) Gen. xli. 45.

that our heart may return him, if not blood for blood, at least, love for love; may it return him "a love *showing itself* in deed and in truth."[1]

MOTHER OF OUR SAVIOUR, PRAY FOR US!
Mater Salvatoris, ora pro nobis!

MEDITATION XXIII.

VIRGO PRUDENTISSIMA, ORA PRO NOBIS!

AFTER directing us to honour in Mary all the grandeurs of her maternity, the Church makes us celebrate her as Virgin, and first presents to our homage the prudence which distinguishes her among all the daughters of Eve, even the most perfect.

From her childhood, she flies the corrupt atmosphere of the world, to go and breathe the pure air of the sanctuary; she places under the care of the most forecasting prudence a heart which, after all, has nothing to fear from the seduction of the world; for the Lord, who has always held possession of it, does not permit it to know the dangers nor the attacks of concupiscence.

When a prince of heaven comes to bring her the most glorious of messages, Mary is troubled. She is accustomed to a life so solitary, so full of reserve, that "the presence of the angel, who was clothed in the form of a mortal, was enough," says St. Ambrose, "to fill her with a pious fear;"[2] and this fear redoubles when she hears from his mouth the announcement of a dignity naturally incompatible with the vow which she has made, and which is so dear to her heart. Then—O prudence truly admirable!—so far from letting her mind dwell upon the glory of the divine maternity, Mary thinks only of clearing up her conscience,

(1) 1 St. John iii. 18. (2) Tract. de Officiis, lib. i. c. 8.

before she gives her consent. She declares her perplexity to the angel with modest simplicity. The heavenly messenger gives her an explanation which satisfies her; immediately, without further inquiry, she acquiesces with a humility and resignation of herself to God truly sublime, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it done to me according to thy word."[1]

And now what will she do? will she not be eager to announce herself this great mystery to her worthy spouse? No, she keeps silence, guided by a prudence superhuman. But at least, when "the just man Joseph"[2] soon after shall be a prey to the most cruel doubts respecting her, which cannot but betray themselves outwardly, Mary will, no doubt, speak: does it not seem that it will be a duty for her thus to protect her honour? . . . O let us here more and more admire the *Virgin most prudent.* She is sensible that to satisfy her spouse, it requires more than the word of a mortal woman, who might seem to be influenced only by her own interest; she knows, on the other hand, that "he who hopes in the Lord will never be confounded."[3] She therefore keeps silent, and waits for the moment marked out by divine Providence, which in reality will soon justify her confidence.

Later on, when she hears wonderful things spoken of her new-born Son, far from joining her words to those which strike her ears, she does violence to her inexpressible love, and "keeps all in her heart,"[4] knowing that Jesus is not yet to be manifested to the world. When the day of her purification arrives, she faithfully accomplishes the law of Moses, "although," says St. Bernard, "there has been nothing but what was pure in the birth of him who is the source of all purity."[5] In that, no doubt, she wishes to set an example of an obedience which goes beyond duty; but she wishes also to leave a miracle unknown, which prudence does not yet allow to be divulged. And it is from the same motive, that when she finds Jesus in the temple, in the

(1) St. Luke i. 38. (2) St. Matt. i. 19.
(3) Ps. xxx. 2. (4) St. Luke ii. 19.
(5) Serm. de Puritate.

midst of the doctors, she speaks to him in terms which leave no room to suspect either the divinity of the Son, or the miraculous virginity of the Mother.

But who does not know that, in another point of view, Mary was ever possessed of incomparable prudence? Who does not know that she was constantly the perfect model of those prudent virgins spoken of by the Gospel, who are ever ready to be admitted "to the feast of the nuptials of the Lamb,[1] keeping always in their lamps *the precious oil of the love of God and of good works*?"[2]—"Yes," says St. Bernard, "the lamp of this glorious Virgin never lost its brightness, and its light was always so brilliant, that the angels themselves admired it as a prodigy."[3]

And we too are all invited to this heavenly feast, and "at what hour we think not,"[4] the sudden cry will sound in our ears: "Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet him."[5] Do we, in sober truth, sufficiently foresee this hour which is so uncertain? We may be called "at even, or at midnight, or at the cock crowing, or in the morning,"[6] at any moment;—are we ready? . . . .

Alas! O Mary, we "children of light" *have been even to this day* less wise than "the children of this world."[7] Nay more, the Lord has given "understanding"[8] to the bird, whose crowing announces the break of day, wisdom to the laborious insect who "provideth her meat for herself in the summer,"[9] and "wisdom to the serpent;"[10] to us he has given that sharp-sighted intelligence which can observe and calculate, which knows how to prevent misfortune and prepare for success: we make use of it, with the greatest zeal, for the management of the affairs of time, and for the interests of eternity we act like blind men, like "enemies to *our* own soul."[11] Vouchsafe to ask for us of our

(1) Apoc. xxix. 9.
(2) St. Matt. xxv. 4, 10.
(3) Serm. ii., in Assumpt. B. M. V.
(4) St. Luke xii. 40.
(5) St. Matt. xxv. 6.
(6) St. Mark xiii. 35.
(7) St. Luke xvi. 8.
(8) Job xxxviii. 36.
(9) Prov. vi. 6.
(10) St. Matt. x. 16.
(11) Tob. xii. 10.

Saviour the grace to place our salvation before all, O you, in whom we admire a prudence far more eminent than that of Abigail, who is praised by the Holy Scripture for having known how to gain the good will of a justly provoked heart, at the price of a generous sacrifice.[1] Deign to obtain for us, that we may employ the wisest precautions in all that regards our soul and life eternal:—

VIRGIN MOST PRUDENT, PRAY FOR US!
Virgo prudentissima, ora pro nobis!

MEDITATION XXIV.

VIRGO VENERANDA, ORA PRO NOBIS!

ALL that is noble and great, science, virtue, noble character, makes an impression upon us more or less vivid, which inclines us to bow and pay homage to it; and when this science, this virtue, this character are found together in the same person in a high degree, our respect is still more profound.

Let us contemplate Mary with the eyes of faith. Could human science ever enter into comparison with the sublime communications, with which it has pleased the Lord to favour her? Oh! to judge of them, we need not here call to mind that in her most intimate life with him at Nazareth, she partook, as it were, at pleasure, of the divine "treasures of wisdom and knowledge;"[2] it is enough to think of that supernatural view of her soul, which, even before the birth of our Saviour, beheld in the whole course of ages her God glorified in her by the perpetual homage which she was to receive from all the nations of the earth.[3]

(1) 1 Kings xxv. 3. (2) Col. ii. 3.
(3) St. Luke i. 48.

Where else shall we find, among all created beings, a virtue so exalted, so pure, so mild, so heroic? To point out only a few traits,—what astonishing chastity was that which at an age so tender imposed upon itself a vow, the obligation of which naturally forbid her the honour of giving birth to the Messias! an honour nevertheless so much desired among the Jews, that they regarded barrenness as a disgrace. "What sublime humility," says St. Bernard, "is that which supports itself at the summit of greatness, and does not bend beneath the weight of the greatest glory! Mary is the mother of her God, and she styles herself his handmaid."[1] And what obliging and delicate charity, when she begs her divine Son to work a miracle, in order to spare the new married couple of Cana the confusion of an accident which happened at the humble feast at which he was pleased to be present![2] Then what incomparable fortitude of soul, when she assists at the sacrifice of Calvary! "When the disciples had fled," says St. Ambrose, "she stood before the cross, and beheld the wounds of her Son with pious eyes, because she looked not to the death of the victim, but the salvation of the world."[3]

What shall we say, in fine, of her dignity, almost divine, crowned in heaven with a glory inferior to that of God alone? "What is most venerable upon earth," exclaims the holy Abbot of Clairvaux, "is the Virgin womb where the Son of God became incarnate; what is most eminent in heaven, is, next to the throne of Jesus, that of his holy Mother, whose glory is in proportion to the plenitude of grace which was given to her, even in this world, above every other creature."[4]

The most Holy Virgin, then, is most worthy of our humble homage; she claims profound veneration for her august name, for her festivals, for her altars, for the sanctuaries which are dedicated to her, for everything included in the special religious veneration of honour and love which belongs to her. O let us faithfully discharge this sacred duty towards Mary, a duty, the practice of which is founded upon the immeasurable respect

(1) Homil. iv. super Missus est.
(2) St. John ii. 3.
(3) Comment in Ev. secund. Luc. Lib. x.
(4) Serm. i. in Assumpt.

which is due to God, and exercises in its turn so happy an influence upon it. For if it be true, that the Catholic Church is the greatest school for respect which the world has ever seen, first towards God, and consequently towards all that is more or less his image, it may also be said that in our holy religion, devotion to Mary imparts to this feeling, with regard to the divine majesty, a consoling sweetness. When a pious mother instils into the soul of her child veneration and love for the most Blessed Virgin, she calls her by the most sweet name of *Mother of our good God*, a name which shows the child, in a daughter of Eve, of a nature like ours, her by whom this God so great has deigned to come down to us for our salvation: does she not thus impress upon this young heart a respectful confidence in the Most High, which holds the middle course between fear, properly so called, and presumptuous familiarity, and which is full of exquisite sweetness?

Formerly, O Mary, King Solomon, wishing to do honour to his mother, rose up from his throne, went to meet her, and having respectfully embraced her, made her sit on a second throne on his right hand.[1] This, O august and most Holy Virgin, is a very faint image of the honours paid to you by Jesus, during his mortal life, and of the glory with which he crowned you, at your Assumption into heaven. Happy to pay homage to her, whom our Saviour has thus honoured, "we offer you, with all our heart, and with the most devout affection, the tribute of a profound veneration,"[2] which expresses the greatest respect in the language of men. Do not permit us "to forget *in any way* that which is due to you;"[3] and to save us from this misfortune, obtain for us a heart ever penetrated with an unbounded reverence for God, and to revere also, according to his will, all that is venerable in heaven and upon earth.

VIRGIN MOST VENERABLE, PRAY FOR US!
Virgo veneranda, ora pro nobis!

(1) 3 Kings ii. 19. (2) S. Bernard, Serm. de Nativ. B. M. V.
(3) 1 Paralip. xxix. 18.

MEDITATION XXV.

VIRGO PRÆDICANDA, ORA PRO NOBIS!

Properly speaking, God alone is worthy of our praises. Merit, nevertheless, has a claim to our eulogies, provided they are directed to him, "from whom proceeds every best gift,"[1] and that they remain within the boundaries of truth. But where is there, on earth, that merit which may be praised without fear of error or exaggeration? Alas! "God *alone* knows the bottom of our hearts; and *oftentimes* that which is high to men, is an abomination before God."[2]

In praising Mary, in proclaiming her worthy of our greatest commendations, certainly we have no fear either of being deceived ourselves, or of exalting her beyond measure; for the Lord himself "has weighed *her merit* in the infallible balance,"[3] and has caused incomparable praise to be given to her in his own name. Have we ever well understood all that is solemn and glorious to Mary in the salutation of the angel Gabriel? We see in the Holy Scripture many privileged persons receiving the honour of a visit from an angel; but we nowhere see any of them saluted by a heavenly messenger, in pompous and magnificent terms,—"Hail! full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women!"[4] Could anything more honourable be said to a human being? And is not this, according to the thought of St. Ambrose and St. Peter Chrysologus, "a salutation unheard of, one of which we can find no example?"[5] Yet there is nothing in it above the merit of her to whom these so astonishing words are addressed. It is an angel who pronounces them, it is the faithful organ of the "God of truth,"[6] who, soon

(1) St. James i. 17. (2) St. Luke xvi. 15.
(3) Job xxxi. 6. (4) St. Luke i. 28.
(5) St. Ambrose in Luc., c. vi. St. Peter Chrys., Serm. 140.
(6) Ps. xxx. 6.

after, causes similar praises to be given to Mary by the holy mother of John the Baptist.

The Gospel, in fact, tells us that it was not of herself, but after "being filled with the Holy Ghost," that Elizabeth, lifting up her voice, repeated the expression of the angel: "Blessed art thou among women," and added, "Blessed is the fruit of thy womb"[1]—words which admirably exalt the greatness of Mary, by the ineffable greatness of him whose Mother she is. Elizabeth says of the most Holy Virgin, that she is "blessed among women," and of her fruit, that it is "blessed." "O Mary," exclaims St. Bernard, on this subject, "this precious fruit of your womb is not blessed because you are so yourself among all the daughters of Eve; but you are blessed in this manner, because he himself has favoured you beforehand with his blessings. While you are blessed among women, he is not blessed among men, nor among angels; he is, according to the expressions of the apostle,[2] over all things, God blessed for ever."[3]

But has Jesus himself said nothing in praise of his divine Mother? . . . Coming to teach men to be, like himself, "humble of heart,"[4] our Saviour would not exalt, before them, her of whom he was the Son. Nevertheless, when a Jewish woman, delighted to hear him, cried out, from the midst of the crowd, "Blessed is the womb that bore thee, and the breasts which gave thee suck!' "Yea, rather," said he, "blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it."[5] By this, according to the sentiment of Venerable Bede, "our Saviour admirably assents to the testimony of the woman, not declaring her only blessed, who had deserved to be corporally the Mother of the same Word, ... for that the same Mother of God was much more blessed, because she remained perpetually careful to remain in his holy love."[6]

And let us also give to the most Blessed Virgin all manner of praises; and let us say, to her glory, with St. Basil of Seleucia,

(1) St. Luke i. 41, 42.
(2) Rom. ix. 5.
(3) Serm. in Assumpt. B. M. V.
(4) St. Matt. ix. 29.
(5) St. Luke xi. 27, 28.
(6) L. iv. c. 40, in Luc. xi.

that "we can never be afraid of offending against truth, whatever praise we give her, because words can never equal her greatness."[1] Let us supply for our inability by our zeal for her veneration; let us eagerly take advantage of every occasion to speak of her with the most tender devotion, and inspire others with filial confidence in her protection; let us, above all, honour her by the imitation of her virtues, so that by seeing and hearing us, others may take occasion to glorify our divine Mother in her children.

O Mary, "I know not with what praises to extol you, for you bore in your womb him whom the heavens could not contain!"[2] The "God of majesty"[3] alone deserves infinite praise; but, next to God, "you alone are also worthy of all praise,"[4] "O you whom the apostles loaded with praises, afterwards repeated throughout the earth;"[5] you whom all preachers of the divine word, and all the mouths of the truly faithful have ever delighted to "call blessed;"[6] you whose "praise shall not depart out of the mouth of men!"[7] O since we are incapable of praising you as you deserve, grant that at least we may exert ourselves to fulfil our duty towards you by our zeal for your glory, and by our fidelity in walking in your holy footsteps!

VIRGIN MOST RENOWNED, PRAY FOR US!
Virgo prædicanda, ora pro nobis!

(1) Serm. de Incarn. Verbi.
(2) Brev. Rom. in festis B. M. V. (3) Ps. xxviii. 3.
(4) S. Cyril. Alex. Serm. de Virg. contra Nest.
(5) Prov. xxxi. 28. (6) Ibid.
(7) Judith xiii. 25.

MEDITATION XXVI.

VIRGO POTENS, ORA PRO NOBIS!

If Jesus Christ, as God, possessed by nature omnipotence; if, as man, he derived it from his personal union with the divinity from the moment of the incarnation—the striking manifestation of it after his resurrection became the reward of his sufferings and death: this is what he intimated to his disciples, when he said to them, "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth."[1] This sovereign power the divine Son of Mary has communicated to his august Mother with marvellous abundance. Ought not, indeed, the co-operation of Mary in the mysteries of the Man-God, and her intimate participation in his sufferings and his sacrifice on Calvary, to have merited for her the privilege of being associated with the dominion of Jesus over every creature? Ought not she, moreover, who in this world had so long exercised the right of a mother towards him, and so admirably fulfilled her pious duties as such, to have retained in heaven that influence which the most perfect of mothers must naturally possess over the heart of the most tender of sons, so that "for her to be heard by him would always be to have her request granted?"[2] Is it not fitting, in fine, that this incomparable power of intercession should bear in such a mother brilliant marks of grandeur and universality, worthy of him whom she brought into the world?

Accordingly, the most striking facts reveal, in the Catholic world, this power of the most Blessed Virgin. Are the greatest interests of kings and nations at stake? Glorious memory of Lepanto, you witness to all generations the admirable victory, which took its flight from the foot of Mary's throne, to go and fall terribly, and with crushing power, upon the formidable fleet of the infidels to save Christendom, and with it the civilization of the whole of Europe! And you, magnanimous hero, who in that

(1) St. Matt. xxviii. 18. (2) St. Bernard, Serm. de Aquæd.

noble exclamation of faith, cried out at the head of your brave soldiers, "March, we have the Mother of God for our leader," do you not tell us, Sobieski, by that exclamation, to whom you were indebted for your triumph over that compact cordon of Mussulmans, which surrounded the walls of Vienna so closely?

But even you, ardent enemies of Catholic truth, are you not compelled to serve as so many trophies to the glory of the *Virgin most powerful?* . . . . The Church solemnly congratulates her on having "destroyed all heresies throughout the world;"[1] and it pleased God, particularly in the twelfth century, to give the most marvellous lustre to the power of Mary against error. A formidable heresy extended at that time all over the south of France, overthrew altars and temples, put to death the ministers of the Lord, and opposed every thing with fire and sword. The humble St. Dominic came forth to oppose this impious, devastating sect. With what then will this new David arm himself? Will it at least be the shepherd's sling? . . . . No, it is with a rosary in his hand that he stops, overcomes, and gains the most blind and furious enemies of the Church.

And who could enumerate the signal marks of the power of Mary, in favour of all those who have piously implored her intercession? O what sorrows has she alleviated! what melancholy deaths has she prevented! what violent temptations has she enabled people to overcome! what graces of every kind has she obtained for those who have implored her aid, on the earth and on the sea! It is proclaimed with a voice imposing and irresistible by those monuments erected to her glory, those monuments so celebrated by the miraculous recollections which faith and gratitude have there consecrated.

What facts too, what admirable facts, have remained, and still daily remain, hidden in the secrets of souls! Amiable and holy Bishop of Geneva, we know well that you were indebted to Mary for victory over a frightful thought of despair; and you, St. Andrew Corsini, for your conversion and great virtues; and

(1) Brev. Rom., in festis B. M. V.

you, noble martyr of the seal of confession, immortal Nepomucen, for the courage and fortitude which gained you so much glory; but it will only be in heaven that we shall be able to see and admire the innumerable effects of that prodigious power, which God has given her, to enlighten, guide, support, and heal souls redeemed with the blood of her divine Son, and to destroy the empire of that infernal serpent whose head she was destined to crush.[1]

Let us have recourse, then, to the most Blessed Virgin in all our pains, in all our necessities; and let us make it our pious duty to extol her power at all times.

Yes, we will ever love to proclaim, O august sovereign of the universe, that the Lord in you "hath showed might in his arm;"[2] that "in your hand is power and might;"[3] that you can do all things in him who strengtheneth you;[4] that the glory of Jahel and of Judith,[5] triumphing over the enemies of the people of God, is not even a shadow of that with which you shine. O vouchsafe to shelter continually under your protection those who desire never to cease invoking you. Above all, when the decisive moment shall arrive, when our trembling soul shall be about to appear before her Judge, deign to defend her against her enemies, to encourage and fortify her, and, at her entrance into eternity, to receive her in your maternal hands, to present her to your divine Son.

VIRGIN MOST POWERFUL, PRAY FOR US!
Virgo potens, ora pro nobis!

(1) Gen. iii. 15. (2) St. Luke i. 51.
(3) 1 Paralip. xxix. 12. (4) Phil. iv. 13.
(5) Judg. iv. Judith xiii.

MEDITATION XXVII.

VIRGO CLEMENS, ORA PRO NOBIS!

WHY does the Church make us implore the clemency, rather than the goodness of Mary? Goodness has something so sweet, so calculated to move the heart; and in Mary this quality, to us so precious, is so amiable and perfect! Does it not combine in her immaculate heart all the complacency of the most tender of mothers, all the compassion, all the charity of souls most eminent for their inclination to do good to all who mourn, to all who suffer, to all who groan beneath the pressure of misfortune? . . . . O without doubt, Mary is good, and that beyond measure: she has a heart so feeling, that it is surpassed only by that of her divine Son. But the Church, in directing us to invoke her clemency, wishes to make us understand that our profound misery as sinful creatures, our detestable ingratitude towards God, render us naturally unworthy of the benevolent protection of this august Mother. Making but one with Jesus, in regard of whom we are so culpable, has she not much to forgive us before she can interest herself for us? And again, would not the little cagerness we show to imitate the virtues which we contemplate in her, be enough to hinder her from showering down upon us the benefits which we may expect from her, if she were not the Virgin, full of mercy and sweet compassion, the *Virgin most merciful?*

Yes, this noble quality of great hearts admirably shines forth in that of Mary. "We may well understand of her," says St. Bernard, "that magnificent image of a mortal woman clothed with the sun, formerly seen by the prophet of Patmos; for even as that orb of day sheds indifferently its floods of light upon the good and the bad, so Mary regards not in him who invokes her, whether he has been more or less culpable as regards the past; but she shows herself mild, merciful, and clement towards all those who call upon her for help: she embraces, as in

the ardour of extreme charity, all their wants, and all their miseries."[1] . . . And could we conceive it otherwise? Has not she "brought us forth to the Church by her charity?" says St. Augustin.[2] And ought not this ineffable charity to inspire her continually with all the feelings of a mother in our regard, but of a mother whose "heart is become like wax melting,"[3] as it were, with compassion? "Yes, certainly," says the immortal Bishop of Meaux on this subject, "she is always the same towards us; she is always good, she is always our mother. The love of our salvation ever lives within her, and it is not less fruitful, nor less efficacious, than it was at the time of her consent to the august mystery of the Incarnation."[4]

It is not then without reason that piety delights to figure to itself Mary, as well as Jesus, under the emblem of the pelican, which, to appease the hunger of her young ones, feeds them, in some measure, with her own substance; and under that of the hen, which, when her young utter cries of alarm, covers them with her maternal wings with the most remarkable tenderness. In giving us her Son to be our Saviour, has she not given her own blood to us all, whom Jesus honours with the title of "brethren,"[5] and whom she herself cherishes as "the members of the body of *that divine Son?*"[6] And like that mother, who at the cry of her chickens, hastens so fondly to shelter them against all danger, does not Mary, when she hears our groans and sighs, cover us with her protection, to preserve us from all that might prove fatal to us? . . . . Thus, whatever ingratitude we may feel guilty of towards the Son, never, no never let us despair of the clemency of the Mother; but joining confidence with repentance, let us throw ourselves into her arms without any fear, very sure of not being forsaken. After having on former occasions experienced the sweet effects of this same clemency, if we are so happy as to remain still faithful, how much

(1) Serm. de Assumpt. B. M. V.
(2) De Sancta Virginitate, n. 6, t. vi.
(3) Ps. xxi. 15.
(4) Serm. pour la fête de l'Annunciat.
(5) St. John xx. 17.
(6) Ephes. v. 30.

more ought we to reckon on every occasion on the succour of her who so tenderly cherishes "the beloved in God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ."[1]

"Virgin full of clemency, sweetness, and tenderness,"[2] O how well may we say of you, as of our Lord, that "power and mercy belong to you!"[3] If upon earth, an exquisite goodness of heart, which leaves infinitely beneath it the kindness of Rebecca for Eliezer,[4] led you to ask, of your own accord, of your divine Son the miracle of his changing water into wine,[5] what must be in heaven the prodigious extent of this goodness towards us, when, from this "valley of tears,"[6] we humbly entreat you to come to the assistance of poor miserable creatures redeemed by the adorable blood of Jesus! O you, on whose "tongue is the law of clemency,"[7] you, in whom this noble virtue is "like the latter rain,"[8] which comes to refresh the earth, you, who are "nigh to all them that call upon you,"[9] be favourable, notwithstanding our unworthiness, be favourable to us, even to our latest breath!

VIRGIN MOST MERCIFUL, PRAY FOR US!
Virgo clemens, ora pro nobis!

MEDITATION XXVIII.

VIRGO FIDELIS, ORA PRO NOBIS!

O HOW well does this title of *Virgin most faithful* express the character of her who was always so faithful to the Lord, so faithful in every duty, so faithful to grace, so faithful to the will of heaven, even in one of those extreme conjunctures, in which

(1) St. Jude i.
(2) Salve Regina.
(3) Ps. lxi. 12, 13.
(4) Gen. xxiv. 19.
(5) St. John ii. 3.
(6) Salve Regina.
(7) Prov. xxxi. 26.
(8) Prov. xvi. 15.
(9) Ps. cxliv. 18.

we should naturally be led to pardon the heart of a mother for yielding to sorrow!

Fidelity must be a noble and beautiful thing in the sight of God, since he calls himself "the faithful and true,"[1] and he gives, by the mouth of the royal prophet, as a title of honour and distinction, the name of the "faithful of the earth"[2] to the just, upon whom his eyes rest with complacency.[3] But if this applies to all the just, with what complacency then must the Lord look upon that Virgin in whom fidelity, far from ever suffering the smallest blemish, was ever increasing from day to day, "rising from virtue to virtue,"[4] till the glorious moment when "the just Judge placed upon her head the crown due to her merits!"[5] Conceived not "in sin,"[6] like the rest of mankind, but in "justice and holiness,"[7] by a privilege singular and inestimable, she belongs to God from the first instant; and not only did she never for a moment loose the precious tie which united her to him, but she ceased not to tighten it more and more, till the day when she passed from exile to her heavenly country. Thus St. Anselm exclaims, in his admiration of her, "When I contemplate the immensity of grace which is in you, O Blessed Virgin, my mind loses itself, my tongue becomes speechless."[8] "O how beautiful are thy steps,"[9] may we add with the Spouse of the Canticle; "O how sublime have they been *in the ways of grace*, O greatly desired daughter of the King *of kings!*"[10] Virgin ever most faithful, "faithful *in all things* in the sight of God!"[11] The little which it has pleased our Lord to make known to us is ravishing; what must that be which has remained hidden in the inmost sanctuary, which is to be penetrated only by his own adorable eyes![12]

The Gospel, in fact, informs us of you, O Mary, that you

(1) Apoc. xix. 11.
(2) Ps. c. 7.
(3) Ps. xxxiii. 16.
(4) Ps. lxxxiii. 8.
(5) 2 Tim. iv. 8.
(6) Ps. i. 7.
(7) St. Luke i. 17.
(8) Lib. de excellent Virg.
(9) Cant. vii. 1.
(10) Ps. xliv. 11, 12.
(11) Ecclus. xlviii. 25.
(12) Cant. iv. 1.

carried the love of duty even so far as not to accept the dazzling honour of the divine maternity, till after having received from the messenger of the Most High the assurance that this prodigious glory was compatible with the vow which had consecrated you for ever to the Lord. It also tells us that you were faithful to the law, even so far as to submit to the humiliating ceremony of the Purification; you, who by so many titles were exempt from this obligation of other mothers. And we admire you, and we bless God, who exhibits to us in you examples so excellent and noble. But when we consider you on Calvary, when we behold you there faithful to the adorable designs of Providence, even so far as to triumph so heroically over your nature as a mother at the foot of the cross of our Redeemer, ah! we are profoundly moved—we are enraptured at your sublime resignation and superhuman devotion. O what a Son was Jesus! What a Mother were you, O Mary! What unspeakable tenderness in both! . . . . O how true it is then of you, in the full force of the expression, that you were "faithful unto death;"[1] yes, even to assisting at, and uniting yourself, with all the power of your will, to, the most painful and humiliating death of your only Son, the most amiable, and most tenderly beloved!

After this unparalleled act of devotedness to God for the sake of men, can we be surprised "that it should be a thing unheard of, in any age, that Mary should ever have rejected the prayers of those who have implored her assistance?[2] . . ." O is not this admirable constancy of her merciful goodness towards those who call upon her, sufficiently explained by the sacrifice which her magnanimous heart has had the prodigious courage to make in our favour? But if such is her goodness towards "every child of Eve who, from the depth of his banishment, cries to this Mother of mercy,"[3] how great must be her zeal for the interests of those who profess to be particularly devoted to her, and to be "her good and faithful servants!"[4] May we form a part of this happy

(1) Apoc. ii. 10.
(2) Memorare.
(3) Salve Regina.
(4) St. Matt. xxv. 21.

number, by making ourselves equally pleasing to the Son and to the Mother!

O Mary, you ever showed towards God, upon earth, a "heart found faithful before *him*."[1] You have always exhibited it the same, from the height of heaven, towards men, who for more than eighteen centuries have not failed to find in you, next to God, the sweetest and surest refuge. Yes, you are faithful to them in a manner incomparably superior to all human kindness and to all human devotedness. It is hardly lawful to call to mind before you the fidelity of Rahab, who saved the spies of Israel,[2] or that of Michol, who, to save her spouse, did not fear to expose herself to the resentment of her father.[3] O vouchsafe to obtain for us to be ever faithful ourselves to Jesus and to you, that we may deserve to experience continually the happy effects of your special protection!

VIRGIN MOST FAITHFUL, PRAY FOR US!
Virgo fidelis, ora pro nobis!

MEDITATION XXIX.

SPECULUM JUSTITIÆ, ORA PRO NOBIS!

THE Church, having as it were exhausted all the titles which could avail her to honour in Mary the Mother and Virgin, passes on to another class of ideas, to offer to her fresh acts of homage.

And first she invokes her under the image of a mirror, which admirably reflects the "brightness of eternal light."[4] If it be true, indeed, of the eternal Word, that he is the image and "brightness of his Father's glory,"[5] does not Mary reflect in

(1) 2 Esdras ix. 8. (2) Josue ii.
(3) 1 Kings xix. (4) Wisd. vii. 26.
(5) Heb. i. 3.

herself, with the greatest fidelity possible, the adorable attributes of this "Word made flesh?"[1] Does not she resemble him more than all other intelligent creatures? The Lord had destined her to hold the first rank among all the "works of his hands,"[2] to be, according to the expressions of St. Anselm, "above all that is not God;"[3] could he have failed to adorn her with gifts and merits most nearly approaching to his own infinite perfections? . . . . This made St. Peter Chrysologus say, that "he who contemplates her without rapture and ecstacy, disowns God, who has made her the most perfect image of himself."[4]

But why does the Church call her the *Mirror of Justice?* . . . First, because Mary is the faithful mirror of him whose name is the "Sun of Justice,"[5] whose divine rays warm souls, make them fruitful, and cause all Christian virtues to bud forth and blossom in them. Now, Jesus himself designates to us the assemblage of these virtues by this expression, when he says to us: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice,"[6]—those who ardently desire to be perfect, and who labour to become so with zeal and constancy. . . . . There is also another meaning in this word here employed by the Church, which deserves well to fix the attention of every pious soul.

The Apostle St. Paul calls by the name of "justice"[7] the state of sanctifying grace, which gives a title to eternal beatitude. This supernatural state, so honourable, so precious, the first man, by his disobedience, had lost for himself and all his posterity; but directly after his fall, the Lord announces to him "that a woman shall crush the head *of him who makes her fall:*"[8] from that time he can contemplate in this daughter of Eve, as in a mirror, as well the depth of his misery,—for the cure of which nothing less is necessary than a redeemer, a Man-God,—as the necessity of penance, without which he cannot profit by the benefit of the redemption which the Son of Mary is to effect. The angel who

(1) St. John i. 14.
(2) Ps. cxxxvii. 8.
(3) Lib. de exord. humanæ vitæ, c. 7.
(4) Serm. 104.
(5) Malach. iv. 2.
(6) St. Matt. xvi. 27.
(7) Rom. i. 17, 24. Phil. iii. 9. Tit. iii. 7.
(8) Gen. iii. 15.

remained faithful sees, on his side, in this privileged creature, the Mother of him who is the principle and source of his perseverance and confirmation in grace; for we may say, relying upon St. Paul,[1] and several holy doctors of the Church,[2] that it was to Jesus Christ that the good angels were indebted for the merit and reward of their fidelity. In fine, is not the reprobate angel condemned to behold in Mary—conceived in the state of grace, exalted, "because of her humility,"[3] which was so profound, even to the Divine maternity—the folly of his own pride, the immense evil which he has incurred in losing his supernatural beauty, and by contrast, the hideous deformity which degrades him? Does he not see in her, at the same time, the enormity of his sin, for which he had no redeemer, because he had fallen voluntarily from a much greater height than man, by pure malice, without being exposed to the seduction of the senses? And is he not forced to join his voice with that of heaven and earth, which proclaims that "God is just,"[4] and renders to each one according to "his works?"[5]

While we contemplate in the most Blessed Virgin the invaluable favour of "our deliverance from sin,"[6] O let us take care not to imitate "a man beholding his natural countenance in a glass: for he beheld himself and went his way, and presently forgot what manner of man he was."[7] Rather let us be intimately penetrated with this thought, that "being made free from sin, we are become the servants of justice,[8] and as *we* have yielded *our* members to serve uncleanness, and iniquity unto iniquity, so now *we ought to* yield our members to serve justice unto sanctification."[9]

O you, in whom "we behold as in a mirror,"[10] the adorable

(1) Ephes. 10. Col. i. 17, 20.
(2) St. Jerom, in cap. i. ad Ephes. St. Greg. l. i. c. 2, in lib. i. Reg. St. Bernard, Serm. 22 in Cant. St. Thomas, lect. 10 in cap. i. Joan., et qu. 7 præced., art. 9.
(3) St. Luke i. 48. (4) Apoc. xvi. 5.
(5) St. Matt. xvi. 27. Rom. ii. 6. Apoc. xxii. 12.
(6) Rom. vi. 18. (7) St. James i. 24.
(8) Rom. vi. 18. (9) Rom. vi. 19.
(10) 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

perfection of the Most High, O send down upon our souls some salutary rays of the dazzling splendour of your sublime virtues!

Vouchsafe, by your meekness, to correct our sensitiveness and impatience; by your humility, our vain pretensions and our pride; by your purity, our sensual inclinations; by your charity, our coldness towards God, our want of true fraternal love for our neighbour! Vouchsafe, above all, by your holy protection, to re-establish us in the grace of God, if we have the incomparable misfortune to have fallen away from it; to be preserved in it, if we are so happy as to enjoy his friendship, the value and honour of which are infinite; and to help us to become more and more "conformable to your divine Son,"[1] by imitating you, O you, "who are his living image!"[2]

MIRROR OF JUSTICE, PRAY FOR US!
Speculum justitiæ, ora pro nobis!

MEDITATION XXX.

SEDES SAPIENTIÆ, ORA PRO NOBIS!

SON of the eternal Father, adorable Word, "internal word, thought, reason, intelligence increated and substantial of God,"[3] thou art "the fountain of wisdom."[4] Yes, thou art that eternal wisdom "begotten in the womb of the Most High before all creatures;"[5] that Wisdom "who sendeth knowledge as the light, whose thoughts are more vast than the sea, and counsels more deep than the great ocean;"[6] that Wisdom which "reacheth from end to end mightily, and ordereth all things sweetly."[7] Thou

(1) Rom. viii. 29.
(2) St. John Damascen, Orat. de Nativ. B. M. V.
(3) Bossuet, vii. Elev. sur les Myst., xii. semaine.
(4) Ecclus. i. 5.
(5) Ecclus. xxiv. 37, 39.
(6) Ibid., xxiv. 37, 39.
(7) Wisd. viii. 1.

art that infinite Wisdom who rested *in the womb of the most Blessed Virgin*, as "in a tabernacle,"[1] and whom Christian faith loves to contemplate on the knees of that divine Mother, under the features of the most "beautiful above the sons of men!"[2]

And you, O Mary, you are a magnificent throne for this incarnate Wisdom, much more precious and worthy than all that we can know or conceive that is beautiful, rich, and most resplendent in creatures! . . . The sacred history, wishing to show us how wonderful was the ivory throne of King Solomon, tells us that "there was no such work made in any kingdom."[3] O let us not be afraid to say ourselves that the Lord, in his omnipotence, has never created any thing equal to her, whom he has made the living throne of his divine Son: "a throne supereminent and incomparable," where, according to the sentiments of St. Peter Damian, "our great God has been pleased to repose:"[4] "august habitation of the Sovereign Monarch of the universe," says St. Peter Chrysologus; "sacred palace which Wisdom has built for herself; noble and magnificent sanctuary, which she has adorned with seven pillars,[5] which are emblems of the seven gifts bestowed upon the soul of Mary by the Holy Ghost, with abundance so admirable!"[6]

What heart, indeed, was ever so intimately penetrated with that religious fear which continually dreads offending the Lord, and which is careful to weigh even the smallest actions of life? what heart was so eminently endowed with that tender piety which makes us adhere to God with an unbounded devotion, and "delight exceedingly in his commandments?"[7] What human creature ever received so rich an effusion of that "knowledge of the saints,"[8] which enlightens man as to all his duties, and traces out for him the path to follow, to arrive at his last end? The retirement of Mary when yet a child in the temple, her entire consecration to the Lord, her words to the angel in the

(1) Ecclus. xxiv. 12. (2) Ps. xliv. 3.
(3) 3 Kings x. 20. (4) Serm. de Annuntiat.
(5) Prov. ix. 1. (6) Serm. 140 de Annuntiat.
(7) Ps. cxi. 1. (8) Prov. ix. 10.

mystery of the Annunciation, "her life hidden in God"[1] at Nazareth, tell us loudly enough how much this highly privileged soul had been adorned with these precious gifts. And in what other has shone forth, as in Mary on Calvary, that gift of fortitude, which enables one to triumph over the greatest trials? In what other has shone, as in the "*Virgin most prudent*,"[2] the gift of counsel, which directs us in the most delicate circumstances; or the gift of understanding, which penetrates the most elevated ways of grace, as in her, "whose very sleep," say the holy doctors, "did not interrupt her sublime contemplation?"[3] What other, in fine, ever possessed in so high a degree the gift of wisdom, which crowns all the rest, and consists in knowing well the author and end of all things, in not acting, living, or breathing but for him alone? Did not Mary always live for God alone, and was not her sweet and glorious death "the effect of a final stroke of divine love?"[4]

Here let us pay all our homage "to this royal throne,[5] to this divine throne,"[6] of eternal wisdom; and beseech her who has been raised to so great an honour, to obtain for us, with an abundant participation in the precious gifts which constituted the ornament of her noble soul, the grace to place all our esteem in that Christian wisdom which her adorable Son has taught us; the grace to make it the exclusive rule of our conduct, by "seeking first the kingdom of God and his justice,"[7] and securing to ourselves, by our good works, "a treasure which the rust does not consume, and where thieves do not break through, nor steal."[8]

O Mary! do not allow us ever to be led astray by the "wisdom of the flesh, which is an enemy to God,"[9] or by "the wisdom of this world, which is foolishness with God."[10] Rather grant, by

(1) Col. iii. 3. (2) Litan.
(3) St. Ambrose, Lib. de Virg. St. Antonin, t. 2, Serm. 5, Art. i. c. 2. St. Bernardin, t. 2, Serm. 51 p. 4, tit. 15, c. 2.
(4) Bossuet, 1 Serm. sur l'Assompt.
(5) St. Greg. Thaumat., Serm. de Annuntiat.
(6) St. Ephrem, de Laudib. Deip. (7) St. Matt. vi. 33.
(8) St. Matt. vi. 20. (9) Rom. viii. 7.
(10) 1 Cor. iii. 19.

your powerful intercession, that we may be the docile disciples of "that wisdom that is from above, which first, indeed, is chaste, then peaceable, modest, ... full of mercy and good fruits;"[1] which keeps the mind in calmness and evangelical moderation; which represses the disorderly movements of the passions; which seasons our judgments with reserve and circumspection; which teaches us to show indulgence towards others, but to watch with severity over ourselves. O you who were "the living habitation of the increated wisdom,"[2] of that divine Jesus, in whom "shines forth the admirable variety of his gifts,"[3] beseech a rich effusion of them for our souls!

SEAT OF WISDOM, PRAY FOR US!
Sedes sapientiæ, ora pro nobis!

MEDITATION XXXI.

CAUSA NOSTRÆ LÆTITIÆ, ORA PRO NOBIS!

WHEN the world was plunged in the thickest darkness, when no ray of that Christian hope, so mild and firm, enlightened human nature beyond the tomb, when the wretched children of Adam were abandoned to the threefold degradation of sense, heart, and intelligence, true joy was unknown to the earth. Mary comes into the world; God wills that she shall co-operate to our salvation: she gives birth to our Redeemer. In a short time all is changed: man, restored, receives the most sure and consoling knowledge as to the noble character of his nature, the magnificence of his destiny, and the means of attaining to it; the most abundant succours for the healing of his moral wounds, and for the alleviation of all the miseries of life. He is able, henceforth,

(1) St. James iii. 17. (2) Wisd. vii. 28.
(3) Ephes. iii. 10.

to feel, here below, pure and delightful joys, which are as a pledge and foretaste of the divine and eternal joys which the Lord promises him in the other world.

Where were you before the coming of that "good and kind Saviour,"[1] who was given to us by means of Mary, where were you, holy joys of charity, chastity, modesty, and humility; holy joys of the devotion inspired by faith; holy and sweet joys of Catholic piety, ineffable delights of the adorable Eucharist? . . . . Yes, it is to Mary, next to God, that we are indebted for all that, in the religion of Jesus Christ, moves, expands, and elevates the heart. It is she who has secured to us goods so precious, so much happiness, even in this world, by her acquiescence in the word of the angel, whom the Most High "had commissioned to come, as it were, to ask her consent, before giving himself to us by her intervention."[2] Thus the illustrious martyr, St. Ireneus, almost contemporary with the apostles, calls this consent "the cause of salvation to the human race."[3] St. Augustin says, after him: "She procured the redemption of man, who, left to himself, was lost without resource."[4] "By Mary, in Mary, and with Mary," adds St. Peter Damian, "the Son of God was pleased to regenerate human nature: without him, nothing had been made;[5] without her, nothing has been repaired, or restored."[6]

It is in this Virgin, then, worthy for ever of our gratitude and love, that all the members of the Church find their joy and their happiness. She had been the object of the most ardent desires of the just of ancient times, who from afar had saluted in her person the Mother of the Divine Redeemer, and who in limbo had waited for her nativity as the aurora of the glorious day of their triumphant entrance into the kingdom of God. She was, upon earth, after the ascension of our Saviour, "the support and consolation of all the faithful."[7] She is, in the abodes of immortality, the joy of the elect, whose noble family she adorns:

(1) Tit. iii. 4.
(2) Bossuet, 2me. Serm. sur l'Annonciat.
(3) L. v. contra Hæres, c. 19.
(4) Serm. 55, de Sanctis.
(5) St. John i. 3.
(6) Serm. de Annuntiat.
(7) Bossuet, 2de. Serm. sur l'Assompt.

for on ascending to heaven she added to the joy of its blessed inhabitants,"[1] says St. Bernardin of Sienna; "and their greatest glory, next to the sight of God," says St. Bonaventure, "is to behold her."[2] She is, also, according to the pious belief of the Church, the consolation and joy of the souls detained in the place of expiation, where they complete their purification, before they enter into the life of the blessed: "You are their zealous deliverer," says St. Andrew of Crete, addressing her;[3] "I am their Mother," said Mary herself to St. Bridget, "and I cease not to relieve them by my intercession."[4] She is, in fine, in this world, the joy of all Christians: in all ages, in all situations, is not your holy name, O Mary! full of sweetness and charms to them, full of relief and strength?

Let us bless God for having given us, in Mary, a cause of joy so pure, so sweet, so true, so enduring; let us bless Mary for having given us its principle and source. O if the Jews formerly testified their gratitude to Judith and Esther, by public rejoicings and acclamations,[5] what ought we not to do to honour this divine Virgin, to whom we have obligations incomparably greater? How great ought to be our devotion to her august person, our eagerness to celebrate her feasts with equal joy and filial piety!

O you, good and tender Mary, whose salutation formerly sufficed to make the holy precursor "leap for joy in his mother's womb,"[6] you who can "change into joy all the sorrows of *the true faithful*,"[7] you who, next to Jesus, are "our hope,"[8] O till we are able to enjoy with the angels and saints the happiness to behold you, we desire continually to call to mind the charm of your virtues, and repeat your holy praises. Yes, we love to cry out here, from the bottom of our hearts, moved by gratitude and tenderness, "Let our right hand be forgotten, if we ever forget, *O sweet Virgin, the claims which you have to our hearts;* may our

(1) Serm. de Assumpt.
(2) In Spec., Lect. 6.
(3) Orat. i. de Dorm.
(4) Lib. iv., Revelat. c. 138.
(5) Judith xvi. Esther xvi.
(6) St. Luke i. 44.
(7) St. John xvi. 20.
(8) Salve Regina.

tongue be parched, if you are not placed *next to your adorable Son* at the beginning of our joy *and pious canticles!*"[1] May we, at the perpetual remembrance of your benefits, always repeat with transports ever new—

CAUSE OF OUR JOY, PRAY FOR US!
Causa nostræ lætitiæ, ora pro nobis!

MEDITATION XXXII.

VAS SPIRITUALE, ORA PRO NOBIS!

As far as mind is above matter, so far is the body ennobled by being exalted by the purity and uprightness of its actions, towards the natural dignity and sublimity of the soul. And in like manner, as far as the order of grace excels all that is most eminent in the order of nature, so far does the body of the Christian who strives by supernatural motives to sanctify the use of all his faculties, assume a character of admirable grandeur and dignity. It is to honour in Mary this nobleness and this greatness that the Church here invokes her under the emblem of a precious vessel, an image often employed in the Holy Scripture;[2] and it is to give us to understand the sublime degree of this same greatness, that she entitles her *Spiritual vessel.*

Is it not, in fact, telling us that this Virgin of virgins enjoyed beforehand, so to speak, a kind of transformation, approaching to that which will be realized in the elect at the great day of the general resurrection? that her sacred body, possessing by anticipation something of "the qualities of a spirit,"[3] her soul neither felt the weight nor the hindrance of it in its relations to God, but

(1) Ps. cxxxvi. 5, 6.
(2) Prov. xx. 15. Acts ix. 15. Rom. ix. 23. 2 Thess. iv. 4. 2 Tim. ii. 21.
(3) 1 Cor. xv. 44.

could already freely move towards its Creator, and feed on his adorable presence, as if it were given to it to be free from the action of the senses?

Mary had been preserved from original sin, and from concupiscence, which is its deplorable consequence.[1] "She enjoyed then," says Louis de Blois, "the privileges of our first parents in the terrestrial paradise, where, as long as their innocence continued, the faculties of their soul were united to God, and all their senses perfectly subject to their mind."[2] But was it not farther necessary that the flesh, which was to become, according to the expression of St. Augustin, "the divine flesh of Jesus,"[3] should be rendered worthy of that immense honour by qualities analogous to the beauty of the soul which animated it? This latter belonged wholly to God; it was in a manner transformed into God,[4] says the same father again, after St. Dionysius:[5] how can we suppose that her body, created by the Lord to have a part so intimate in the mystery of the Word incarnate, could in anything contradict the holy impulse of that noble soul, or not be in perfect harmony with its sublime destination?

Let us then welcome with pious eagerness what, after many holy doctors of the Church, Richard of St. Victor hands down to us, that "her exterior was wholly angelical, as well as her interior,"[6] and admirably reflected the wonderful communications of her soul with God. If, in fact, "the eyes of John the Baptist, destined to see the Christ announced by the other prophets, disdained to look upon any creature,"[7] we cannot doubt that Mary concentrated upon her divine Son the use of all her senses, and that everything in her exhibited the life of a pure intelligence, rather than that of a human creature.

Alas! how far are we from such a model, we who are so

(1) Medit. xvi. supra. (2) Institut. Spirit. append. i. c. 2.
(3) Serm. 8, de Assumpt. B. M. V. (4) Serm. 35, de Sanctis.
(5) In Epist. ad B. Paul.
(6) In Cant. cap. 26. St. Ambr. de Instit. Virg. c. 7; 2 de Virgin. St. Thomas, Sent., dist. 3, q. 1, art. 2 ad 4. St. Bonav., dist. 3, part 1, art. 2.
(7) St. Jerom, Ep. iv.

strongly attached to vain idols, which time disfigures and carries away with everything else; we who devour with our eager looks the frail goods of this world, and so unfortunately employ our activity in pursuing the deceitful enjoyment of them; we who seem to have but a wavering faith "of the invisible goods of eternity;"[1] we who too often let ourselves be weighed down by this body, the inconvenient weight of which renders our communication with God in prayer difficult, and hinders us from walking with joyful steps in the service of our adorable Master! O henceforth let us make generous efforts to become "men spiritual,"[2] remembering that "he that soweth in the spirit, shall reap life eternal."[3] If we cannot, even at a distance, resemble Mary, divinely privileged as she is, let us, at least, correct "by our fervent devotion"[4] "that corruptible body which is a load upon the soul, ... and presseth down the mind,"[5] which would take a sublime flight towards its Author.

O Mary! the Lord made of you from the beginning, "a most pure vessel."[6] But when the Holy Ghost "came upon you,"[7] to operate "the mystery of godliness, which was manifested in the flesh,"[8] in your chaste womb, and to elevate you at the same time to the most august dignity among all creatures, he made you more and more pure and holy; he filled you more and more with that "perfect spirit,"[9] which makes man live for God, and for the good things of eternity. We honour in you that superhuman life which is so perfect, and all those privileges with which it has pleased the Most High to adorn it. May we imitate you, as far as it is given to our weakness, by disengaging ourselves from the captivity of the senses in all things, by "walking as children of the light: for the fruit of the light is in all goodness, and justice, and truth: proving what is well pleasing to God." O do not refuse to obtain for us that grace;

SPIRITUAL VESSEL, PRAY FOR US!

Vas spirituale, ora pro nobis!

(1) 2 Cor. iv. 18. (2) 1 Cor. iii. 1. (3) Gal. vi. 8.
(4) Rom. xii. 2. (5) Wisd. ix. 15. (6) Prov. xxv. 4.
(7) St. Luke i. 35. (8) 1 Tim. iii. 16. (9) Ps. l. 14.

MEDITATION XXXIII.

VAS HONORABILE, ORA PRO NOBIS!

It is a great honour for a body to be united to a soul which is "the image of God;"[1] the more that soul is beautiful and enriched with the gifts of the Lord, the greater is the dignity to which this alliance so intimate raises the body: it becomes thereby like a vessel which is the more precious, as the perfume which it contains is, in the eyes of faith, more rare and exquisite. What an honour, then, is it for the body of Mary to be united to a soul, which, next to that of Jesus, is the most noble, most pure, most holy, and most adorned with the favours of heaven!

But how much more honourable is that sacred body, on account of the divine maternity! It was anciently, no doubt, a great honour for Abraham to receive the Lord under the form of an angel, and to be allowed to converse familiarly with him;[2] but God did not unite himself substantially to that patriarch. It was a great honour for Moses to enter into the formidable cloud, which covered Mount Sinai, and to be able, in like manner, even in the midst of lightning and thunder, to converse face to face with the Most High;[3] but God did not become substantially united with that immortal legislator. It was a great honour for Elias to hear and see striking signs of the infinite greatness of the Supreme Being;[4] but God, when he manifested to him his adorable presence, did not unite himself substantially to that faithful prophet. It was a great honour for Zaccheus to receive Jesus Christ at his table,[5] and for Lazarus and his sisters to show him hospitality, and even to enjoy the signal favour of his divine friendship:[6] but how far are all these relations, however precious and honourable, from that intimate and incomparable relation of the Man-God with his Mother! . . . .

(1) Gen. i. 27.
(2) Gen. xviii.
(3) Exod. xix., xx.
(4) 3 Kings xix.
(5) St. Luke xix.
(6) St. Luke x. St. John xi.

O let us not be surprised that the holy doctors of the Church, struck with admiration in presence of that divine Mother, should have saluted in her, in terms the most expressive, that august womb, where the Word assumed our human nature! "The flesh of Mary," says St. Augustin, "is the very flesh of Jesus."[1] "It is a living heaven," says St. Peter Damian, "it is the bodily sanctuary of the fulness of the divinity."[2] "The Lord," says St. Thomas of Villanova, "in making a daughter of Adam his Mother, has exalted her to such a greatness, that all the eyes of men and angels cannot reach it."[3] We honour, and justly, the precious vessels in which the Church encloses the holy and adorable Eucharist. But is there any proportion between that silver, or that gold, set off by the most magnificent ornaments, and the august and ever venerable body, which supplied our divine Redeemer with the adorable blood of our redemption? . . . . Yes, that is supereminently "the vessel of election of the Lord,"[4] of a value infinitely superior to that of a "massy vessel of gold, adorned with every precious stone;"[5] it is that flesh so pure and holy, which, after having worthily "borne God in itself,"[6] did not know the corruption of the tomb, but on the contrary, according to the pious tradition of the Church, was glorified by resurrection like the body of the divine Jesus.

Let us here reanimate our faith; let us remember that by the ineffable mystery of the Eucharist, our body, corruptible as it is, finds itself elevated to a sublime union, which also makes of it a vessel of honour; and that we ought constantly to be afraid of profaning it by the slightest defilement. . . . O we cannot too much meditate upon, or too much penetrate into, this truth, under all its aspects. By the holy Communion we become temples of Jesus: this is not enough, sanctuaries of Jesus, tabernacles of Jesus; this is not enough, sacred vessels, true living vessels in which Jesus reposes. . . . . What do I say? this is still not enough, living vessels, with which he unites himself in so intimate

(1) Serm. de Assumpt. B. M. V., cap. 5.
(2) Serm. 3 de Nativ. B. M. V.
(3) Conc. de Annunt.
(4) Acts ix. 15.
(5) Ecclus. l. 10.
(6) 1 Cor. vi. 20.

a manner, "that he makes now but one with them,"[1] says St. Cyril. "We, then, who have received so great an honour, let us not be so unhappy as to disown him, above all, so as to descend to the rank of the brute, who has no understanding."[2] We, who are full of just veneration for the sacred vessels of our altars, O let us know, in every place and at all times, how to respect ourselves; let us know how to keep our thoughts, our affections, our desires, our views, and all our actions up to that height of nobleness, greatness, and admirable glory to which we are elevated by one single Communion.

O Mary, you who deserve all homage, next to God, you contained for nine months in your chaste womb him whose effulgent majesty the angels adore, "covering their faces with their wings."[3] What, then, can we offer to you for the honour which he has done you in borrowing from your substance the body with which he is clothed, and in giving you thus "a kind of ineffable identity"[4] with him? . . . . Receive here the expression of all those sentiments with which so much elevation and greatness must inspire the heart of the true faithful. Make us feel how high the divine Eucharist places even us among creatures, and that, become by means of it more august than the sacred vessels which contain it, we may consider ourselves, in all things and at all times, as "vessels of honour,"[5] prepared for celestial glory.

VESSEL OF HONOUR, PRAY FOR US!
Vas honorabile, ora pro nobis!

(1) Lib. iv. in Joan., cap. 17.
(2) Ps. xlviii. 13.
(3) Isa. vi. 2.
(4) St. Peter Damian, de Nat. Virg.
(5) Rom. ix. 21, 23.

MEDITATION XXXIV.

VAS INSIGNE DEVOTIONIS, ORA PRO NOBIS!

Piety, devotion, fervour,—words inadequate to express what burning zeal there always was in Mary, for the service of the Lord. Who could describe the lively ardour of her prayer, her intimate union with God, her silence of ecstacy, her peace, her spiritual joy—so sweet, so delicious,—her continual aspirations towards her beloved, the holiness of her thoughts, the purity of her affections and desires, her self-devotedness, so generous, so magnanimous, so absolute to the glory of her Creator?

Temple of Jerusalem, where she so piously spent the first years of her life, O what secrets, worthy of our admiration, hast thou enclosed within thy sacred precincts! August house of Nazareth, where she lived so long in the presence and constant contemplation of her God, become her Son; thou whose venerable walls so eloquently speak to the heart of the pilgrim of Loretto, tell us then something of all those wonders of adoration, praise, love, and superhuman effusion of the soul of Mary in the heart of the divine Jesus! And thou, O holy abode, which she shared with the beloved apostle, after the death of our Saviour,[1] O what transports of incomparable devotion hast thou concealed from the knowledge of men! what raptures, what unspeakable sighs, when Jesus had ascended to heaven! "What impetuosity of love, to which everything tender in nature, everything divine and efficacious in grace concurred!"[2]

If Queen Esther could venture to say to God, "Thou knowest . . . . that thy handmaid has never rejoiced . . . . but in thee, O Lord;"[3] if the holy King David could testify of himself that "the praise of the Lord was always in his mouth,"[4] if he exclaimed in the ardour of his soul, "When shall I come and

(1) St. John xix. 27. (2) Bossuet, 1 Serm. sur l'Assompt.
(3) Esther xiv. 18. (4) Ps. xxxiii. 2.

appear before the face of God?"[1] if the Apostle Paul could say, "I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me;"[2]—"having a desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ;"[3] if, in fine, the illustrious missionary of the Indies, amidst the inebriating emotions of his tender piety, feeling himself overpowered with love, prayed to God to moderate his favours: "Enough, O Lord, enough!"[4] . . . . what must we think of the august Mother of our Saviour, of her whom the saints have called a furnace, a fire of "divine love,"[5] and whom the Spouse in the Canticle compares to "a lamp of fire and flames?"[6] Was there for her a day, an hour, a moment in which her thought, word, will—the whole activity of her being—had not God alone for its object? an instant in which she did not do "the things that please him,"[7] and with an eagerness, a purity of intention, a devotedness which we cannot conceive? Let us ask this rather of the angels and seraphim, "ravished," says St. Bernard, "with the ardour and splendour of the holy flame of her devotion"[8] . . . . and who could tell the joys, the sweetness, the marvellous delights with which this devotion inundated her heart? You yourself give us enough to judge of it, O Mary, by that expressive exclamation of your sacred Canticle, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour."[9]

O piety! O sweet and tender Christian piety, O thou who art the principle and support of all the magnificent works of charity; thou who impartest resignation to the heart lacerated with grief, and strength to the soul attacked by despair; thou who dost draw from the eyes of repentance tears mixed with so much consolation, and tears almost heavenly from those of innocence, inebriated with Divine love, come, O come and penetrate us with thy most precious unction; come and make of us "vessels of honour sanc-

(1) Ps. xli. 3. (2) Gal. ii. 20.
(3) Phil. i. 23. (4) Life of St. Francis Xavier, t. i. p. 246.
(5) St. John Damascen, De Dormit. B. M. V. St. Bernardin of Sienna, Serm. 9, de Visit.
(6) Cant. viii. 6. (7) St. John viii. 29.
(8) Serm. 2 in Assumpt. (9) St. Luke i. 47.

tified and profitable to the Lord, prepared unto every good work!"[1] By thy celestial influence may all our members be in the hand of God "as instruments of justice,"[2] to combat and conquer sin! May our bodies be a living sacrifice, "holy and acceptable to God!"[3]

Vouchsafe, O Mary! "admirable instrument, the work of the Most High,"[4] vouchsafe to obtain for us the grace to be pious, and to show ourselves meek and strong in our piety. In ancient times, at the word of the prophet Eliseus, an unhappy widow, pursued to extremity by an inexorable creditor, had brought to her by her children a number of empty vessels; she poured into them, in succession, part of the small quantity of oil which she had left; all these vessels were miraculously filled, and she had wherewith to pay her debt, and even enough to support herself and her family.[5] To you also, O holy Virgin! on the word of the angel, who hailed you as "full of grace,"[6] on the word of the Church, who calls you *Vessel of singular devotion*, we offer our hearts, alas! too devoid of Christian piety and good works, which spring from it. Do not refuse to pour into them unceasingly from your superabundance, so that we may not only satisfy the divine justice by our fervour, but acquire precious merits for heaven. It is written that "godliness . . . has promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come;"[7] and that these promises so consoling may be realised in our favour.

VESSEL OF SINGULAR DEVOTION, PRAY FOR US!
Vas insigne devotionis, ora pro nobis!

(1) 2 Tim. ii. 21. (2) Rom. vi. 13.
(3) Rom. xii. 1. (4) Ecclus. xliii. 2.
(5) 4 Kings iv. (6) St. Luke i. 28.
(7) 1 Tim. iv. 8.

MEDITATION XXXV.

ROSA MYSTICA, ORA PRO NOBIS!

The sacred books give us to hear the voice of the heavenly Spouse, comparing his spouse to a garden border of spices, "with all the chief perfumes."[1] "Arise," he cries, "arise, O north wind, and come, O south wind, blow through my garden, and let the aromatical spices thereof flow."[2] It is the divine Virgin, whom Christian piety loves to recognise under the image of all the chosen plants, of all the odoriferous flowers of this garden of the Spouse of the Canticles. It is Mary, whom she delights to style, with St. Ephrem, "the true garden of pleasure,"[3] where all flowers abound, with the heavenly odour of all virtues: flowers, among which the Church made choice of the rose for the name of this beloved one of the Lord, thus giving her praise the most delicate, the most graceful, the best calculated to charm our mind and our heart.

O rose, whom the Creator has made so sweet and so fair, so rich in show, and of such pleasing odour, O queen of all those terrestrial flowers, which are so magnificent in their inimitable attire, and yet so varied in the shades of their colours and their odoriferous emanations, with what happiness do I salute you, as the emblem of Mary, my divine Mother, that Queen of all intelligences, even the most embellished by grace, that Queen of all the spiritual flowers which form and will form the ornament of the Church of heaven and the Church of the earth, that Queen, in fine, of all creatures! Like you, but in a sense and in a manner infinitely superior to your delicious charms, O how does Mary shine forth in beauty, how enchanting is she by the incomparable sweetness and divine odour of her virtues! . . . .

Never did the beauteous soul of the most Blessed Virgin

(1) Cant. iv. 14. (2) Ibid. iv. 16.
(3) Orat. de Deipara.

undergo even the shadow of the slightest alteration; never did the least breath of evil come to spoil the freshness or the splendour of that *mystical Rose;* never did the pure calyx of that marvellous flower, truly the favourite of God, cease to exhale to him the sweet perfume of love and praise—of love the most ardent, and praise the most pious. Although planted, like its sisters, on a soil where so many storms bend and wither their stems and strip their brilliant corollas, she has never lost either her original beauty or the sweetness and excellence of her perfume.

Yet you have had thorns, *O Mystical Rose*, alas! and the sharpest thorns too, but for yourself alone. Could you fail, O Mary! to resemble the divine head of the elect, that adorable Saviour, who "was to suffer, and so to enter into his glory?"[1]

Was it not necessary, moreover, that like your divine Son, you should learn by yourself to "have compassion on our infirmities,"[2] and to feel for us that lively sympathy which is imparted by the experience of the same sufferings?[3] . . . . But with regard to us who are your brethren according to the flesh, your beloved children according to grace, you are without thorns. "You have nothing which can wound," says St. Ambrose, "nothing which does not express an universal benevolence."[4] "What is there in you," says St. Bernard, "which could inspire fear or diffidence? You have nothing terrifying, nothing austere; you are all sweetness towards all. . . . . Go through the Gospel history attentively," adds this holy doctor, "carefully examine all the sacred pages; if you find in Mary the smallest trait of reproach or severity, if you discover the slightest indication opposed to the greatest meekness, I am willing that we should speak no more of this divine Mother."[5]

O let us follow the attraction of the heavenly odour of this immortal rose, which embalms innocent hearts, and constitutes their joy and delight; "let us run after her."[6] Let us take care

(1) St. Luke xxiv. 26.
(2) Heb. iv. 15.
(3) Heb. ii. 17, 18.
(4) Lib. 2 de Virginitate, cap. 2.
(5) Serm. 1 de Assumpt.
(6) Cant. i. 3.

not to suffer ourselves to be overpowered by the ephemeral perfumes here below, nor to let ourselves be dazzled by the deceitful glare of created things, which, "like grass . . . flourish in the morning, *and* in the evening fall, grow dry, and wither."[1] Let us remember that in this world everything has been given to us to raise up our souls to God, and that far from fixing our heart upon it, as if it were our last end, we ought to use it to excite ourselves to the desire of, and earnest search after, that true country where there are none but immortal flowers, and where the *Mystical Rose* is the admiration of saints and angels.

O Mary! you are "exalted . . . as a rose-plant in Jericho;"[2] you have flourished "as the rose planted by the brooks of waters;"[3] your beauty is like that of the lily;[4] "and as the flower of roses in the days of the spring."[5] But who shall give us an adequate idea of "the good odour of Jesus,"[6] which everything in you breathes forth? Who shall tell us how much the perfume of your virtues surpasses the "odour *of* the best myrrh?"[7] Yes, you are that chosen flower, which alone in the barren valley of this world, have drawn down upon you the "dew . . . from above, ... the Just One."[8] O blessed flower, wonderful flower, flower of heaven, it is in heaven alone that it will be given us to know you well, and to praise you worthily! Grant that we may walk in the "odour of *your* ointments,[9] in the pure and undefiled way"[10] of the true children of God, to have one day the happiness to see you, and glorify your Son for all the favours with which you have been loaded!

Mystical Rose, pray for us!
Rosa Mystica, ora pro nobis!

(1) Ps. lxxxix. 6.
(2) Ecclus. xxiv. 18.
(3) Ecclus. xxxix. 17.
(4) Isa. xxxv. 1.
(5) Ecclus. l. 8.
(6) 2 Cor. ii. 15.
(7) Ecclus. xxiv. 20, 21.
(8) Isa. xliv. 8.
(9) Cant. i. 4.
10) Ps. c. 2.

MEDITATION XXXVI.

TURRIS DAVIDICA, ORA PRO NOBIS!

If the tower of David, "built with bulwarks, on which hung a thousand bucklers, all the armour of valiant men,"[1] was the ornament and defence of Jerusalem, is not Mary the glory and impregnable fortress of the Church? Moreover, does not the blood of David flow in her veins, the blood of that holy king, who, before he arrived at the throne, had known how to unite with the modest attributes of a shepherd the noble distinction of conqueror of the Philisthine giant? How justly then may Mary be called *Tower of David*, she, in whom we admire so much humility joined with so much greatness and glory! . . . .

But in what respect ought we specially to apply to the Blessed Virgin the image of "a great *and high* tower,"[2] the inaccessible front of which defends a warlike city? It is particularly under the aspect of her protection from the assaults which Satan has always made against the Church, the depository of the truth brought from heaven by our Lord Jesus Christ. "O how powerful is this august Queen against hell," exclaims St. Bonaventure; "she is much more terrible than an army set in array."[3] . . . Hence the wicked angel has never failed, when attacking the Church with violence, to attack at the same time the most Blessed Virgin, who is its impregnable citadel.

From the second century, when the wicked Cerinthus dared to dispute one of the privileges which the Catholic faith secures to Mary, there has hardly been an heresiarch whose tongue or pen, either directly or indirectly, has not been disposed to direct against her the venom of his false doctrine; there has not been one whose audacious folly Mary has not confounded by the thunders of the authority of the Church, which is ever ready to

(1) Cant. iv. 4. (2) 2 Esd. iii. 27.
(3) Cant. vi. 3.

defend Jesus Christ when attacked in his august Mother. This is why that faithful guardian of the heavenly doctrine delights to exhibit to us "the old serpent,"[1] struggling, always in vain, to raise his head from beneath the ever victorious foot of the divine Virgin, whose admirable power against error it seems as if the Lord would in modern times make more conspicuous than ever.

It is a remarkable thing that those nations who have been the most devout to Mary, are those who have been preserved, or have had the least to suffer, from the ravages of the heresy of the sixteenth century. Look at Italy, Spain, Belgium; look at France . . . . France, where the protection of the Queen of Heaven manifested itself anew, and in a striking manner at the end of the eighteenth. There was then worse than heresy,—there was impiety armed with political power reigning in absolute sovereignty. No more temples, no more altars, no more priests; faith was of itself a crime deserving death. . . . . O Mary! will you then forget that France was always to you a country of predilection; that it was dedicated to you by one of its kings, of pious memory?[2] Do you not hear the ardent sighs of your servants who remain still so numerous amid so many desolating apostacies? And in the land of exile, do not our confessors of the faith join their most fervent supplications to those of the faithful sheep, from whom the fury of the tempest has compelled them to retire? . . . Oh! this good and tender Mother will not forsake her cherished people; all the efforts of triumphant impiety will be broken at length against the new tower of David. Very soon, in fact, the temples are reopened, the altars set up again, the pastors are restored to their sheep; and it was on the day of the glorious Assumption of the most Blessed Virgin that the celebrated concordat was signed, which was the pledge of the restoration of the Church of France.

Here let us congratulate ourselves, before God, upon the happiness we have in being born on a soil which belongs to Mary by a solemn consecration, a consoling pledge of the preservation

(1) Apoc. xii. 9. (2) Louis XIII.

of the precious treasure of faith in our fine country. Nevertheless, let us not forget that formerly the apostles, though they were certain, from the word of their Divine Master, that the persecution of the Synagogue would be powerless against the Church in its infancy, "with one accord lifted up their voice to God,"[1] to pray for victory. We, also, earnestly beseech the Lord not to permit faith to be ever extinguished among the people beloved by Mary; and in our temptations, in those especially which are contrary to that fundamental virtue of Christianity, having recourse promptly to her, let us take refuge in this tower of David, where the darts of the enemy cannot reach us.

O divine Mother of Him who calls himself "the truth,"[2] it is to you that your adorable Son seems to have confided the care of his Church; for it is to you that this same Church[3] refers the glory of her triumphs over all the errors which have attempted to shake the most holy points of belief, and even the foundations of the "city of God."[4] You are to her a refuge, "a tower of strength against the face of the enemy;"[5] you are "the strong tower,"[6] which saves her children in "the day of tribulation."[7] O protect us, Holy Virgin, against the assaults of hell, and especially against every danger which our faith might incur; protect us above all at the hour of death, and to prepare us for the last combat, which ought to secure our eternal triumph, obtain for us of God a faith, lively and immovable.

TOWER OF DAVID, PRAY FOR US!
Turris Davidica, ora pro nobis!

(1) Acts iv. 24.
(2) St. John xiv. 6.
(3) Brev. Rom. in festis B. M. V.
(4) Ps. lxxxvi. 3.
(5) Ps. lx. 4.
(6) Prov. xviii. 10.
(7) Ps. xix. 2.

MEDITATION XXXVII.

TURRIS EBURNEA, ORA PRO NOBIS!

IVORY has a shining whiteness, and a remarkable enamel, which please the eye, and, at the same time, a solidity and strength analogous to the gigantic animal which supplies man with it: a twofold image equally applicable to the most Holy Virgin. In what other human being could we find, as in her, that innocence and candour of soul which the angels themselves admired; that splendour of virginity, which, during the days of her terrestrial pilgrimage, was reflected in her universally, and the charms of which penetrated all hearts with a feeling of ineffable reverence?[1]

But without dwelling here on that miraculous purity which has already been several times the subject of our meditations, let us confine ourselves to the consideration of the mystical "*Tower of Ivory*,"[2] as the model and support of our perseverance in the service of our Lord.

How great was the perpetual consecration of Mary to God, amidst all the sacrifices which filled up her most holy life in this world! From the time of her separation from her family, which the Most High required of her at an age so tender, what tribulation, what anguish, what heartrending and certain foresight, what agonizing sorrows elevated to sublimity her constancy in the path of duty! The perplexity of St. Joseph on the subject of mystery, which prudence did not permit her to reveal to her chaste spouse; the journey to Bethlehem, so painful on so many accounts; the isolation and destitution of the stable, the sole asylum left to the Infant-God; the double prophesy of the holy old man, Simeon, on the unjust hatred of which our Saviour was to be the object, and on the sword which was to "pierce the soul"[3] of his Mother; the flight into Egypt, with all the incon-

(1) St. Dionysius Areop., Ep. ad Paul. apud Carthus, in 1 Sent. dist. 16, q. 2.
(2) Cant. vii. 4. (3) St. Luke ii. 35.

veniences and all the privations of exile; the desolating absence of Jesus during three days after the feast of the Passover; the humiliating labours to which she saw him subjected in the poor workshop of Nazareth; all the fatigues and sufferings of his public life; the intrigues, the pursuits, the atrocious calumnies of his enemies, which so deeply affected her; all the unheard-of ignominies and disgrace of his passion; the cross, in fine, standing before her maternal eyes, and herself standing at the foot of that cross: O what an uninterrupted succession of rude trials, well calculated to disconcert and subvert the courage of a daughter of Eve! . . . . But in the midst of all these trials, Mary, ever calm and serene; Mary, ever submissive, ever inseparably united to the will of her God; Mary, ever valiant and devoted; Mary, always the same,—what an example! what an eloquent lesson for us who are so little firm, so little constant in good!

As long as the dangerous occasion is at a distance from us, or temptation leaves us at rest, or the world will not find fault with our fulfilling our duties towards God, our feet do not stray from the right path, they even run without fatigue in the way of salvation. But as soon as obstacles arise in our path, as soon as we must do violence to ourselves, to break through the deceitful charm of the seduction of the heart or the senses, or to rise above the senseless ridicule of "the children of the world,"[1]— then we feel ourselves wanting. O if we imitated Mary, far from letting ourselves be discouraged by the storms which Providence permits to vent their rage against us, we should regard them as precious means of expiating the past, of acquiring a holy distrust of ourselves, and an entire confidence in God alone, of strengthening ourselves in good by the conflict against evil, and of gaining inestimable merit for eternal life. And you too, pious souls, if you walked in the footsteps of her whom you love to call your good Mother, would you not bear with more courage and confidence the weight of those interior pains which may

(1) St. Luke xvi. 8.

assault you? . . . O do not forget that one day of fidelity to God in dryness, in mental darkness, in wearisomeness and disgust, becomes more profitable to you than a thousand days passed in the holy joys of devotion. There are, according to the sentiment of St. Augustin, two lives, one of which depends upon the other: "that of trial, which we must undergo; and that of beatitude, for which we must hope."[1] In this second life, all your groanings, all your sighs, all your acts of resignation will be taken into account before God; and you will find them again at the feet of the "just judge,"[2] transformed into so many precious pearls, the immortal splendour of which shall increase the glory of your celestial diadem.

O Mary! incomparably more brilliant in the sight of the Lord by your virtues and merits than ever was, in the sight of men, "the house of ivory"[3] made by the seventh king of Israel, and the "great throne of ivory"[4] of King Solomon, we will always lift up our eyes to you as to a tower of salvation, "whence help shall come to us,"[5] against the world and the devil, against the evil propensities of our nature, against the obscurities of the understanding and the discouragements of the will. Perseverance in good, in the midst of temptations of every kind "with which our life is beset,"[6] is a grace above all price; and we cannot petition for it with too much earnestness. It is by your happy intercession that we hope to obtain it; and to protect our frail virtue, we desire to take refuge henceforth in your immaculate heart, as in an impregnable asylum. O you, whom we invoke full of confidence,

TOWER OF IVORY, PRAY FOR US!
Turris eburnea, ora pro nobis!

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(1) Lib. 2, de Act. cum Fel. Manic. c. 10.
(2) 2 Tim. iv. 8.
(3) 3 Kings xxii. 39.
(4) 3 Kings x. 18.
(5) Ps. cxx. 1.
(6) Job vii. 1.

MEDITATION XXXVIII.

DOMUS AUREA, ORA PRO NOBIS!

How great a wonder was the temple of Jerusalem, built by King Solomon! Independently of the magnificent stones, with which the foundations and walls were built, who could but have admired the wainscoting of cedar, carved with so much ability, the cherubim, the palm trees standing out in relief, the flowers opening beneath the brilliant glitter of the gold, the very pavement inlaid with plates of that precious metal, which was so profusely employed that "there was nothing in the temple that was not covered with gold,"[1] and that it might almost literally have been called a "house of gold?"

But how much more does this name belong to the most holy Virgin, the living sanctuary which the Lord himself made for himself; which "he hath chosen for his dwelling,"[2] august and holy! This is saying too little,—with which he has united himself by sanctifying grace more closely than with any other created being, and by the divine maternity, in a manner approaching nearest to the adorable union which makes one and the same person of the eternal Word and the Son of Mary! . . . . Before the Incarnation, you were already, O incomparable Virgin, in a wonderful sense, the house of the Lord, his *House of Gold*, by pre-eminence, you whom he had adorned with so many prerogatives, infinitely more precious than all the gold in the world; you, whose every thought, desire, word, and action were, in his sight, of a value so superior to that which that brilliant metal bears with men, which is the object of their search, which is full of seduction, which, alas! is the spring of motion, and too often the idol of their whole life! But on the eternally memorable day of the Annunciation, you became in a sense much more wonderful still, his *House of Gold:* for of your most pure substance

(1) 3 Kings vi. 22. (2) Ps. cxxxi. 13.

the Word made then and for ever his own; he dwelt within you for the first nine months of those expiatory years upon earth, living on your life: and that sublime alliance, that ineffable union, "has merited for you to be proclaimed blessed by all generations, blessed by all the prophets, by all the powers of heaven; yes, blessed in our mind, in our heart, blessed in all the concerts of our praises!"[1]

And how justly, moreover, is this Virgin called the *House of Gold*, who is endowed with a perfect purity, of which gold, not subject to any change, is so excellent a symbol; this Virgin inflamed with divine love, of which gold is likewise the emblem, on account of its fiery colour! In fact, is not her perpetual integrity one of the greatest miracles of our Lord? "Does not the excellence of her purity," says St. Anselm, "surpass, without comparison, all the purity of all creatures? And is not this what made her worthy to be in a certain sense the restorer of the world, which was plunged in the lowest abyss of perdition?"[2] Her love of God is no less astonishing. "Who can doubt," exclaims St. Augustin, "that the womb of Mary, in which God, who is charity itself, reposed corporally for nine months, was not wholly transformed into charity?"[3] This is why St. Bernardin could say of this Blessed Virgin, "that there was so much love within her that she would willingly have given herself up to death for her Son, not once, nor a thousand times, but an infinite number of times, if it had been possible."[4]

Alas! why is it not the same with us, so far, at least, as may be permitted to our weak nature! Why do we, who by Baptism, by Confirmation, by the Eucharist have been consecrated to God "as his temples,"[5] show ourselves so little worthy of the "holy of holies,"[6] who has condescended to make "his living abode"[7] within us? Why are we, who would be so eager to decorate our dwelling, if it was to have the honour of receiving some illustrious

(1) St. Ildefonsus, Lib. de Virginit. B. M.
(2) De exul. B.V., c. 9.
(3) Quoted by St. Bonaventure, in spec. c. 14.
(4) Serm. de Nat. B.V.
(5) 2 Cor. vi. 16.
(6) Dan. iii. 24.
(7) 1 St. Peter ii. 5.

guest, so little zealous to make of our soul and body a *House of Gold* agreeable to the Lord? . . . . Why, yet again, so far from allowing ourselves to be inflamed with the love of the sovereign good, do we feel only a foolish passion for "the bewitching of vanity which obscureth good things,"[1] and coldness for that God who is so ravishing an object of amiability and love? . . . . Shame and confusion upon us! But also let there be repentance, and henceforth frequent acts, as frequent as possible, of piety, devotion, and ardent love towards him whose temples it is given us by a signal favour to become.

It is through you, O Mary, it is by your intercession, which is so powerful, that we hope to deserve to have accomplished in us that word of your divine Son: "If any one love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and will make our abode with him."[2] In you the Lord has been pleased to dwell,[3] in a wonderful way, and he has filled you with his glory[4] in a manner much more wonderful than he formerly filled the temple of Solomon. O if we could comprehend the honour to which he raises us, by making ourselves his living temples, how faithful should we be in keeping ourselves pure and holy: faithful in sacrificing continually upon the altar of our heart nature to duty, present and transitory joys to the future and permanent joys of eternity: faithful in keeping constantly alive therein the fire of holy love! Pray for us, that we may have this inestimable happiness: we beseech you with all our heart.

House of gold, pray for us!
Domus aurea, ora pro nobis!

(1) Wisd. iv. 12. (2) St. John xiv. 23.
(3) Ps. cxxxi. 14. (4) 3 Kings viii. 11. 2 Paral. v. 8.

MEDITATION XXXIX.

FŒDERIS ARCA, ORA PRO NOBIS!

If the magnificent temple of Solomon, where it may be said that everything was of gold, presents to us an emblem of Mary, what was most august in this "house of the Lord,"[1] the ark of the covenant, is a much more significant figure still of this divine Virgin.

The ark was made of a wood which was not liable to decay,[2] although its germ was corruptible. And you, O Mary! though sprung from a guilty stem, were preserved from the original stain, and no corruption has ever been able to reach you.

Plates of pure gold covered the ark both without and within; it was surmounted with a crown of gold, and covered with the propitiatory, which was also made of that precious metal; two cherubim, also of gold, with their wings extended, overshadowed the propitiatory, from above which the majesty of God delivered his oracles to the children of Israel.[3] And you, O Mary! "full of grace,"[4] with what shining gold, without alloy, and beyond all price, have you been clothed! What a throne have you offered in yourself to the Lord! May we not say of you, with St. Andrew of Crete, that "you are the universal propitiatory of the world,"[5] the living sanctuary, whence the "Word made flesh"[6] has made the oracle of salvation heard by the whole earth?

In the ark were deposited "a golden vessel full of manna, the rod of Aaron, which had *miraculously* blossomed, the *two* tables of the covenant,"[7] given to Moses on Mount Sinai. And you, O august Virgin, you had the happiness to conceive and bring forth him who became for our sakes "the living bread, which came down from heaven."[8] You had the infinite honour to become

(1) 3 Kings viii. 11.
(2) Ex. xxv. 10.
(3) Exod. xxv.
(4) St. Luke i. 28.
(5) De dormit. Virg.
(6) St. John i. 14.
(7) Heb. ix. 4.
(8) St. John vi. 51.

the Mother of a Son who was formed within you, and was born of you by a prodigy far more astonishing than that which struck the twelve tribes with admiration, when they saw the dry rod of the high-priest covered with leaves, blossoms, and fruit.[1] You contained within you, by a favour unequalled, the Author himself of the two tables of the covenant; you became as it were "the depository of the sacred title-deeds of the Old and New Testament,[2] the abridgment of all the divine oracles,[3] the book of the divine Word, whose sacred pages the eternal Father opens to the eyes of the whole world."[4]

God in former times impressed his people, and sometimes even the Gentiles, with a profound respect for the ark of the covenant, by various prodigies which were occasioned by it;[5] before it the Israelites bowed down to procure the favour of heaven,[6] and its stay in the house of Obededom drew down the blessing of the Lord upon him and his family.[7] Before you, O Mary! the faithful prostrate themselves to obtain of your divine Son the favours which they solicit, well knowing that he delights to dispense his gifts to men through you, and that "every grace flows from your hands."[8] Through you thousands and thousands of prodigies in temporal affairs and in those of salvation are wrought, to the great admiration of men of faith; and does not your sacred image piously venerated in Christian families draw down upon them precious benedictions?

Who, in fine, could fail to see in the solemn entry which David made with the ark into Jerusalem, the figure of your glorious and triumphant Assumption, O you "ark of sanctification, who arose *from earth to heaven* into your resting-place,[9] and to sit at the right hand of God,"[10] with whom you never cease to show yourself our good "Mother?"[11]

(1) Numb. xvii. (2) Rupert, in cap. 4 Cant.
(3) St. Andrew of Crete, Serm. de Assumpt.
(4) Serm. de laud. Virg., attributed to St. Epiphanius.
(5) Exod. xxv. Josue iii., vi. 1 Kings v., vi.
(6) Josue vii. 6. (7) 2 Kings vi. 11.
(8) St. Bernard, Serm. 3 de nomine Mariæ. (9) Ps. cxxxi. 8.
(10) St. Mark xvi. 19. (11) Hymn *Ave Maris Stella*.

O may we show ourselves true children of Mary, and find in this august ark of the new covenant a continual protection and a source of heavenly blessings! "He who neglects the service of the most Blessed Virgin," says St. Bonaventure, "runs a great risk of dying in his sins; but he who worthily honours her shall be justified and saved;"[1] for she is, according to the expressions of St. Peter Chrysologus, "the blessed Mediatrix between man and the Man-God;"[2] and if the merits of him who "prays," adds St. Anselm, "cannot prevail upon Him to hear, those of the divine Mother, who intercedes for him, cause him to obtain his request."[3]

As the ark carried before the Hebrews in the passage of the Jordan introduced them into the land of promise, so do you enable us, O Mary! happily to pass over the dangerous waters of the present life; you are to us the *living* "ark of the Lord of all the earth."[4] Doubtless the covenant with which the "God of majesty"[5] condescended formerly to honour Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the children of Israel, was very precious. But it was after all only an image, a shadow of that with which the Son of the Eternal favoured us by becoming man for us in your womb, by regenerating us by his adorable blood, the merits of which he applies to us by those sacred rites which sanctify us from our cradle, assist us, strengthen us, console us during life, and at our last hour encourage us, and dispose us to pass with confidence over the awful threshold of eternity. O you by whom all these blessings have come to us, "paradise of the new Adam,[6] living palace of the Most High,"[7] obtain for us the grace to make good use of them, and to repeat always to you with the pious ejaculation of a faithful heart—

ARK OF THE COVENANT, PRAY FOR US!
Fœderis arca, ora pro nobis!

(1) In Psalt. (2) Serm. de Annunt.
(3) De excellent Virg. (4) Josue iii. 11.
(5) Ps. xxviii. 3.
(6) St. John Damascen, Orat. de dormit. B. M. V.
(7) St. John Chrysost., Hom. 2, in fest. S. Joan. B.

MEDITATION XL.

JANUA CŒLI, ORA PRO NOBIS!

"I AM the door," said Jesus;[1] "no one cometh to the Father, but by me."[2] To give then to Mary the name of *Gate of Heaven*, is not this attributing to her what belongs exclusively to the Man-God? Is it not infringing the inalienable rights of the Son in favour of the Mother?

O certainly the Church, which is "the pillar and ground of truth,"[3] does not forget that oracle of St. Paul, that "there is one God, and one Mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus: who gave himself a redemption for all."[4] But she teaches with St. Jerom, that "all the honour paid to Mary tends to the glory of Jesus as its end;"[5] and with St. Anselm, that "if Mary has so much power, it is from Jesus that she derives it, and with him that she exercises it."[6]

It is, therefore, to the greater glory of the Man-God, that the Church here invokes the most Holy Virgin as the *Gate of Heaven*, a title admirably adapted to that divine Mother. Was it not through Mary that heaven was, in a manner brought down to the earth, when she drew down amongst men Him, whose name is "God with us?"[7] for "she had conceived him in her heart," says St. Leo, "before she conceived him in her womb."[8] Was it not through her that "the goodness of God our Saviour appeared to all men,"[9] under the forms of humanity, of him who is "the resurrection and the life,"[10] and whose triumphant ascension was able alone to introduce to the abode of eternal happiness even the most holy souls of those who had died before "he entered into his glory?"[11] "Was it not by Mary," says St. Augustin, "that

(1) St. John x. 9. (2) Ibid., xiv. 6.
(3) 1 Tim. iii. 15. (4) 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.
(5) Ad Eustoch. (6) De excell. Virg., c. 12.
(7) St. Matt. i. 23. (8) Serm. i. de Nat. Dom.
(9) Tit iii. 4. (10) St. John xi. 25.
(11) St. Luke xxiv. 26.

*x x

God descended visibly upon earth, that by her men may merit to ascend to heaven?"[1]

What powerful support are you, indeed, "O sweet Virgin Mary,"[2] to all those who implore you, and humbly entreat you to assist them to become worthy to enter one day into celestial bliss! O how justly did St. Anselm say that "it is through you that the exiles are called back to their eternal country!"[3] You enlighten them, you encourage and support them; for, according to the immortal Bishop of Hippo, you are "the Mother of all the faithful, who are the members of Jesus Christ, since you co-operated by your charity to their spiritual birth;"[4] and if they do not render useless, by their wickedness, the powerful influence of your benign protection, you guide them happily to the port of salvation. This made St. Antoninus say, after St. Anselm,[5] these astonishing words,—"As it is impossible for him from whom you turn away your merciful eyes to be saved, so it is certain that he for whom you intercede, will obtain justification and glory."[6]

If then we have seriously laboured to this day to draw down upon us the benevolent regard of the most Holy Virgin, let us feel happy, and bless the Lord, "who inspires those," says St. John Damascen, "who are predestined to salvation with tender devotion towards Mary."[7] Let us lift up our eyes with joy towards the eternal Paradise of delights; there we shall not see a cherub armed with a flaming sword, keeping guard to forbid us entrance, as formerly on the threshold of the garden of Eden; but we shall have the consolation to behold there a Mother, the sweetest, most tender, and most indulgent of mothers, turning continually towards us eyes of love,—towards us, who drag along with pain our unsteady steps on this same earth, which she also once trod with her blessed feet; we shall see her, with her hands extended towards this place of banishment and trial, inviting us to confide in her protection; to do violence to ourselves, in order to bear

(1) Serm. 18 De tempore. (2) Salve Regina.
(3) In medit. (4) Lib. de sancta Virginit., c. 6.
(5) De excellent Virg., c. 11. (6) IV. Part, tit. 13, c. 14.
(7) Orat. de Assumpt.

away that kingdom,[1] which the blood of her divine Son has laid open to our desires and hopes.

If hitherto we have had the misfortune, either to forget Mary, or to have only a weak devotion towards her, or a devotion too often contradicted by our works, let us deplore our ungrateful coldness—let us tear away the bandage of illusions. The compassion of a mother is great; what must be that of a mother like Mary! . . . But from this moment let us have a devotion towards her worthy of Jesus—whom we ought to love and glorify in Mary; and worthy of Mary, whom our brethren ought to learn to love and glorify in the examples of all those who call themselves her servants.

In former times the patriarch Jacob, seeing in a dream a mystical ladder, from the top of which our Lord foretold to him the sublime future of his posterity, exclaimed, in a transport of holy trembling, " How terrible is this place! this is no other but the house of God, and the gate of heaven."[2] What shall we say of you, O Holy Virgin, with whom that same God vouchsafed to contract the closest and sweetest alliance of blood and of nature? O you are ever worthy of our reverential fear, by your admirable greatness! But, likewise, that maternal tenderness, with which you " open to us the doors of heaven, and rain down *with marvellous abundance* the manna *of all graces*,"[3] cannot but inspire us with confidence perfectly filial. With these sweet sentiments, we acknowledge you for the true " gate of the Lord, *through* which the just enter[4] into his *eternal* rest,"[5] and through which we hope to enter into the same ourselves. Pray then for us, unworthy as we are;—

GATE OF HEAVEN, PRAY FOR US!
Janua Cœli, ora pro nobis!

(1) St. Matt. xi. 12. (2) Gen. xxviii. 17.
(3) Ps. lxxvii. 23, 24. (4) Ps. cxvii. 20.
(5) Heb. iv. 10.

MEDITATION XLI.

STELLA MATUTINA, ORA PRO NOBIS!

O DIVINE Mary! immortal *Morning Star*, you are as sweet in our eyes as you are radiant and glittering! If you do not emit, like the sun, dazzling rays of light which enlighten, warm, and fructify all nature, at least you shine as the star which precedes the course of that "giant of the heavens!"[1]

But who can tell the beauty of that new day which you announced to the earth, O happy "star of Jacob, who appeared in *the horizon of idolatrous humanity*,[2] to enlighten them that sat in the shades of death!"[3] Who can describe the happiness which the world enjoyed in being able to salute in you the approach of its deliverance, the august and holy aurora of that adorable "Sun of justice,"[4] who, after having in a manner veiled his splendour in your chaste womb, showed himself afterwards to our eyes with immense brightness, spreading his beneficent rays on every side, imparting the light of truth to those who were deceived by error, communicating to the miserable "children of death,"[5] that life which alone deserves the name—life eternal? Star of salvation, you displayed a splendour worthy of "the sun when it shineth;"[6] you were truly "the bright and morning star"[7] of that blissful day when the world saw the divine Star of its redemption and ineffable regeneration arise upon it! O be you blessed, for ever blessed by every heart and every tongue! for you have been as the inestimable pledge of "the reconciliation of earth with heaven,[8] of our sanctification by Jesus Christ,[9] of our eternal salvation,[10] of our vocation to the kingdom and glory of God!"[11]

(1) Ps. xviii. 6. (2) Numb. xxiv. 17.
(3) St. Luke i. 79. (4) Mal. iv. 2.
(5) 1 Kings xxvi. 16. (6) Ecclus. i. 7.
(7) Apoc. xxii. 16. (8) Col. i. 20.
(9) 1 Cor. i. 30. (10) Heb. v. 9.
(11) 1 Thess. ii. 12.

And is not even now this mystical *Morning Star* a pledge of hope and salvation? "Take away Mary," says St. Bonaventure, "and what would become of us unfortunate wretches? what would become of us in the midst of the darkness of the world, if we were deprived of her mild light?"[1] Alas! who does not know that there are dangerous moments when the light of faith seems to be eclipsed, to give place to thoughts the most opposite to its divine doctrines; moments when we feel violently inclined to what we despise and detest with the fulness of our will; when the imagination is heated and carried away so far as to delight in objects, which strike us with horror as soon as the false charm falls away, and a calm returns? But if then we raise a suppli-cating voice to this star of benediction, it delays not to show its consoling rays, and recover for us our serenity. Who does not know, too, by sad experience, that there are hours of bitter disgust, devouring wearisomeness, dark and melancholy humour and deep discouragement, when the heart seems ready to fail, if not sup-ported by supernatural power? But if, in those hours of desolation and anguish, fervent sighs call Mary to our succour, her radiant brow soon dissipates the storm, and restores us to ourselves; for, "in all the storms which can assail us here below," says St. Bernard, "it is enough to look up to that tutelary star, to escape shipwreck."[2]

Let us then implore with fervour the aid of Mary; let us beseech her to put to flight the "powers of darkness,"[3] even as the first rays of daylight make the lions "lie down in their dens;"[4] let us beseech her to guide us safely over the dangerous sea of this life to the shores of heaven. She delights in saving the mariner who confides in her holy protection; and the grateful mariner rejoices to repeat to distant lands the glory of "Star of the Sea,"[5] and to sing with enthusiasm the name of Virgin of the Port, Virgin of the Guard, Virgin of good Succour. O how much more does sweet Mary love to support, direct, and save the pious

(1) In Spec. B. M. V. (2) Hom. super Missus.
(3) Ephes. vi. 12. (4) Ps. ciii. 22.
(5) Ave Maris Stella.

Christian who calls upon her amidst the storms of the heart, the storms of the mind and of the senses! How much more ought we, who perhaps have often been consoled by the mild splendour of that cherished star, to be grateful and faithful towards our heavenly benefactress, and honour her by a life pure as the unchanging rays of her light!

O you, the sure asylum of the mariner in danger, Virgin ever ready to afford relief, remove far from us tempests and shipwrecks on this ocean full of shoals, on which is launched the frail skiff which is freighted with our eternity, happy or miserable! Formidable clouds, which conceal frightful ravages, may surround us, assail us, and deliver us over to terrible waves; but they can never take you from our sight, "O star ever radiant, ever consoling, ever protecting! Following her, you do not go astray; praying to her, you do not despair; thinking of her, you do not fall into error; when she supports, you do not fall; when she protects, you do not fear; when she leads, you are not fatigued; when she is favourable, you arrive at the desired end;[1] and as the star of the sea guides the seaman to the port, so do you (O Mary!) conduct Christians to glory."[2] Deign, O deign to realize all these wonderful effects of devotion to you, O Mary, in favour of those who, in the calm as well as in the storm, desire to say to you incessantly with tender love,

MORNING STAR, PRAY FOR US!
Stella Matutina, ora pro nobis!

(1) St. Bernard, Hom. 2 super Missus.
(2) St. Thomas, Op. 8.

MEDITATION XLII.

SALUS INFIRMORUM, ORA PRO NOBIS!

SUFFERINGS! these are the appendages of humanity. By the side of one child of Adam who moves along alert and joyous in the journey of life, a thousand others, a prey to infirmities more or less painful, drag on their steps with difficulty and with tears, and utter a voice of complaint, and at times heartrending cries.

But amid this mournful concert which arises from the sufferings of human nature, a name august and sweet, a name full of charms, resounds from the mouth of the infirm Christian; and that name piously invoked calms sorrows, repairs strength, relieves, and may even heal, the most inveterate ills, and put an end to the most incurable maladies; it is the name of the divine Mary. To what heart next to that of Jesus, to what heart better formed to understand him, could the suffering faithful soul address himself? O did not Mary learn enough how to feel compassion when she contemplated the long and indescribable sufferings of her adorable Son on the torturing wood? Did she not, at the foot of the cross, receive from his divine lips, as an inalienable inheritance, all the faithful in the person of the "disciple whom Jesus loved?"[1] Did she not thenceforth include us all, with unspeakable tenderness, in the sweet embraces of her incomparable charity? . . . . And does not he who in his infirmity invokes this heavenly Mother, know that her power is equal to her love? . . . .

It is only in particular places that popular devotion has raised to other saints monuments of confidence and gratitude; but to Mary they abound in the whole Christian world. Who has not heard of those celebrated sanctuaries dedicated to that divine Mother, and who has been able to have the honour of visiting any one of them, without being piously moved on seeing the irresistible

(1) St. John xix. 26.

evidences of the innumerable bodily favours obtained through her intercession? . . . . Inscriptions engraved by gratitude, various presents offered to her altar; human limbs made of gold or silver laid at her feet, as trophies of her power over maladies obstinately resisting all human art; poor instruments of wood, which had supported the man who came to implore her aid, to drag himself along to the threshold of the holy place, and which her intercession has rendered henceforth useless, hung up on the sacred walls, as a peculiar and touching homage to her glory: O how eloquently do you speak to our faith! how strongly do you excite confidence in her whom the Church so well denominates *Health of the weak!*

Doubtless, she does not always obtain for us what we desire, because the fulfilment of our wishes, so far from being conducive to our real good, would often be injurious to us. But this "Mother of Grace"[1] always becomes our *health* in infirmity: always, if the heart which sends forth towards her the pious desire of prayer does not interpose any wilful obstacle, she obtains for it the grace to make its sufferings turn to the advantage of its eternal interests; she endues it with strength and patience, fills it with resignation and tranquillity during the long sleepless nights, and long days without relief; she penetrates it with the sentiment which animated the holy man Job, when he exclaimed, "Who will grant . . . . that this may be my comfort, that whilst he afflicteth me with sorrow, he may not spare *me*, and I may not contradict the words of the Holy One!"[2] . . . . And when the hour arrives which is fixed by the Lord, death comes to him who suffers under the auspices of Mary, not formidable and terrible, like a grievous punishment, but peaceful and serene as a sweet passage from the end of the combat to the joys of victory, from the "vale of tears"[3] to that magnificent kingdom where God *himself* "wipes away the tears from the eyes of his elect."[4]

Let us have recourse then, with full confidence, to the most

(1) Hymn in Offic. parv. B. M. (2) Job vi. 10.
(3) Salve Regina. (4) Apoc. vii. 17.

holy Virgin, in all the corporal evils with which God is pleased to permit us to be afflicted; and let us not grow weary of imploring her intercession with the adorable Jesus, remembering those words of St. Bernard: "God has given her absolute power in heaven and on earth; he has placed our life and our death in her hands."[1] Let us implore her above all for our last moments, and, in order to secure her powerful aid at that hour which decides our all for eternity, "let us live every day as if we were to die before the end of it."[2]

O you whose tender heart can say to us, far better than the great Apostle: "Who is weak, and I am not weak?"[3] be you glorified for displaying your power so often, and so wonderfully, for the relief or cure of our bodily sufferings. O you are a living resource to us all, "who heal all our diseases,"[4] while the pool of Jerusalem offered a cure only at times, and to him only who had the good fortune to go down first into it, when the water was moved by the angel of the Lord.[5] We bless your divine Son a thousand times for causing a secret virtue to go forth from you, as formerly from his own divine person during his mortal life, to heal all our maladies;[6] and we beseech him to let us experience it, especially at that decisive hour, when we shall be on the brink of eternity. O sweet Virgin, who "vouchsafe to receive with maternal goodness the last sigh of him who commends himself to you with confidence,"[7] grant that at the last moment we may feel, in its fullest extent, the efficacy of that pious invocation of the Church—

HEALTH OF THE WEAK, PRAY FOR US!
Salus infirmorum, ora pro nobis!

(1) Serm. i. on the Salve Regina. (2) 1 Cor. xv. 31.
(3) 2 Cor. xi. 29. (4) Ps. cii. 3.
(5) St. John v. 4. (6) St. Luke vi. 19.
(7) St. Jerom, Ep. 2 ad Eustoch.

MEDITATION XLIII.

REFUGIUM PECCATORUM, ORA PRO NOBIS!

It is in the nature of man greatly to apprehend appearing before him whom he knows that he has offended, were it only to testify to him his repentance and beg his forgiveness, especially if the offender is notoriously inferior, and has shown himself very ungrateful towards a signal benefactor. O what relief, what consolation does he experience, when some mutual friend, a devoted and influential friend, comes to offer him his happy mediation, and facilitate his reconciliation!

But if it is the mother of him whose clemency he feels it necessary to solicit, who condescends to interpose her powerful influence in his favour, with a son full of tenderness towards her, how great is his joy and happiness!

Sinners, whoever you may be, bless, O bless the divine Mary, who comes with admirable goodness to place herself between you and her adorable Son, whose incomparable benefits you have undervalued, that infinite love, whose supreme majesty you have audaciously offended! O, without doubt, you are but too guilty against him: if you consider only the God and Saviour, whom, alas! you have been able so much to offend, will you not be tempted to fly "before the face of the Lamb,"[1] before the avenging "lion of the tribe of Juda," [2] and to cast yourselves into the abyss of despair? . . . But behold his august Mother opens to you eyes full of sweetness and mercy, and invokes in your behalf the remembrance of those blessed days when the Man-God reposed in her arms, as if to render her the depository of the infinite treasure of his graces. If you were a thousand times more culpable, still should you take courage: she is powerful enough to obtain your pardon, and her goodness leads her to ask for it.

Can she be ignorant of all that ineffable mercy contained in the

(1) Apoc. vi. 16. (2) Apoc. v. 5.

heart of her divine Son for the unfortunate children of Adam, who make themselves the slaves of sin? O never upon earth will any one show an interest for them so tender as Jesus has done: he carried it so far that his enemies made it a subject of reproach and accusation against him.[1] But did not his sweet Mother enter into his feelings more intimately than any creature? and when she was assumed into heaven, did she not carry with her to the seat of happiness that heart so good, and always so feelingly alive to the loss of souls, redeemed by blood of which she knows all the value? "Her compassion," says St. Bonaventure, "only increased with her glory; and now that she reigns with Jesus, this commiseration is so much the greater, as Mary sees more clearly the misery of mankind,"[2] who are ungrateful for the admirable mystery of redemption.

Thus the holy doctors, when speaking of her compassionate goodness towards sinners, exalt it, as it were, beyond all bounds. St. Ephrem calls her "their most powerful resource, the secure port of all who have suffered shipwreck."[3] "You are their only hope, O Mary!" exclaims St. Augustin.[4] "Let there be no more mention of your clemency," says St. Bernard, "if any one can be found to have implored it in vain!"[5] "O Mary!" says St. Bonaventure again, "the sinner, even if he be the refuse of the whole world, does not horrify you; but you receive him with maternal tenderness, and do not leave him, till you have reconciled him to his formidable Judge."[6]

Admiration, praise, and eternal benediction to God, who has laid open to the deep misery of the sinner so precious an asylum! Confidence, confidence unbounded, continual confidence in Mary, both when we pray to her for the pardon of our sins, and when we pray to her for the conversion of our brethren, and when we pray to her for the cure of our spiritual infirmities. Confidence again, unbounded and constant, when discouragement, or even

(1) St. Matt. ix. 11. St. Luke vii. 34.
(2) In specul. B. Virg., c. 5.
(3) De laudib. B. V.
(4) Serm. de Annun.
(5) Serm. de Assumpt.
(6) In Psalt.

despair, threatens to ruin our holy resolutions, and our good inclination to virtue; then, let us cry out with the Church, "Hail, O Queen, Mother of mercy! our life, our sweetness, and our hope!"[1]

As the Apostle St. Peter, in an ecstacy of mind, saw once a number of animals, which were unclean in the eyes of the Jewish law, purified by the power of the Lord, and taken up again to heaven,[2] so do we see with admiration, O Mary! a multitude ot souls who had been but too much defiled with crime, converted by your intercession, washed from their iniquities, and "brought to the haven"[3] of eternal salvation. O you are truly, to the greatest sinners, an asylum much more secure than was formerly the fortress of Bethsura to those "who had forsaken the law"[4] of God; and safer than the altar which Adonias took hold on to escape the vengeance of King Solomon.[5] How many times, how many times has the just Judge, disarmed by your favourable intercession, been able to say to you, as David did to Abigail, "Blessed be thou who hast kept me this day from . . . revenging me!"[6] How often have you been pleased to remember the feeble tribute of homage which had been offered to you by hearts who deserved too well to be compared to the sinful woman Rahab, or the children of Babylon,[7] and to save them from the eternal abyss! Multiply, O Mary! multiply incessantly the traits of your admirable goodness towards so many blind and senseless creatures, who are running on to eternal misery; they are, by the close bonds of Christian charity, our fellow-members,[8] and, therefore, we say to you,—

REFUGE OF SINNERS, PRAY FOR US!

Refugium peccatorum, ora pro nobis!

(1) Salve Regina. (2) Acts x.
(3) Ps. cvi. 30. (4) 1 Macc. x. 14.
(5) 3 Kings i. 50. (6) 1 Kings xxv. 33.
(7) Ps. lxxxvi. 4. (8) 1 Cor. xii. 27.

MEDITATION XLIV.

CONSOLATRIX AFFLICTORUM, ORA PRO NOBIS!

Where are there souls without afflictions, hearts without anguish, or eyes without tears? This world is nothing to man but a school of adversity, where he must learn to raise up his mind to God, to humble himself before him, to pray to him, to aspire towards a better world, towards the happiness of heaven; and to all the sorrows of life is joined the natural horror of death, which, after all, is inevitable, and which, at almost every step, presents itself to us under various forms, and seems to say to us,—It will soon be your turn. O if we regarded only the troubles, the cruel deceptions, the profound sorrows, the inconsolable mournings, the anguish of soul which God alone knows, and which almost bring it down to despair, should we not be tempted to cry out, as we borrowed the thought of Bossuet upon death,—We must live, how sad is our fate?

But for us, Christians, God, in his admirable providence, has vouchsafed to prepare, along with these pains, an inexhaustible source of unspeakable consolation: it is the heart of Mary; a heart full of immense compassion; a Mother's heart, such as never existed before, and will never exist again here below; the heart of a Mother who identifies herself with her children, who, in some measure, forgets herself, to "weep with those who weep,"[1] and to relieve, by the most tender expansion of affection, the various evils which afflict them.

O how sweet a present from the Lord are you, O Mary! to us who are "groaning and weeping in this valley of tears!"[2] O beloved Mother, how powerful is the only thought of you to lighten the weight which oppresses the heart, to sweeten the bitterness with which it overflows, and to heal the cruel wounds which consume it! You were so excessively afflicted yourself, you

(1) Rom. xii. 15. (2) Salve Regina.

so holy, you the august Mother of our God; you had to drink of a chalice enough to overcome all human strength; you were plunged in grief "great as the sea,"[1] and crucifying! And in this extremity, wholly unequalled, you were so resigned, so calm; you so admirably gave yourself up to the Divine will! Where is the sinner,—and which of us is not a sinner?—who does not feel relieved in his afflictions, when he sees, that notwithstanding your innocence, you had so large a share of sharp pains, and of moral sufferings truly indescribable? Who is there, again, who does not experience a feeling of pious consolation, when he thinks of all the tender concern, of the lively sympathy, of the devotedness, of the compassionate and helping charity for us which exist in your maternal heart?

Yes, our divine Mother feels for us, unhappy afflicted ones, an expansive and benevolent sweetness, which is inconceivable. The heavenly Spouse compares the goodness and sweetness with which all her words were impressed, during her abode upon earth, to all that is most sweet in nature:—"Thy lips . . . are as a dropping honeycomb, honey and milk are under thy tongue."[2] And again, wishing to express to us all that is ravishing in that sweetness of Mary in our regard, he is in a manner enraptured with it himself: "Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come. . . . Let thy voice sound in my ears; for thy voice is sweet."[3] St. Bernard, then, has good reason to say that "everything in her breathed kindness and beneficence; that she made herself all to all, and showed to all a superabundant charity."[4] "O Mary," exclaims that holy doctor, "O Mother of unspeakable amiability, always, yes always, does your very name penetrate the heart with a sweet emanation of that divine sweetness, with which the Lord has enriched your beauteous soul!"[5] "No, no, there is not in heaven, among all the saints," adds St. Antoninus, "one heart that feels for our miseries like that Blessed Virgin Mary."[6]

(1) Lament. ii. 13. (2) Cant. iv. 2.
(3) Cant. ii. 13, 14. (4) Serm. de verbis Apoc. Signum magnum.
(5) Paneg. B. M. V. (6) P. 4, t. 15, c. 2.

Let us go then to this heavenly comforter in all our pains, especially in spiritual pains; let us pour them into her maternal heart; she will not disappoint our confidence; for "she is the sweetest relief of our anguish," says St. John Damascen, "and the surest remedy of moral sufferings."[1]

Who could, O Blessed Virgin! measure "the length, the breadth, the height, and depth"[2] of your merciful goodness! "Mercy grew up with you: it was born with you;"[3] it was to men, before the foundation of the Church, "as the morning star in the midst of a cloud, and as the moon at the full;" and since you have ascended to heaven, "as the sun when it shineth."[4] O you, whom we love to call, next to God, "the comfort of our life,[5] our hope in the day of affliction,"[6] you, whom the Lord makes use of to change our days of trouble and sorrow into joy, as formerly he employed the pious Esther to comfort and succour his people, be you also, at all times, our support in our desolation and sufferings! We shall go to you with that lively faith, and that sincere piety which ought to distinguish your true servants. Obtain that tears, pains, tribulations, and sorrows may turn to the greater good of those who say to you in the effusion of a filial heart,—

COMFORTER OF THE AFFLICTED, PRAY FOR US!
Consolatrix afflictorum, ora pro nobis!

MEDITATION XLV.

AUXILIUM CHRISTIANORUM, ORA PRO NOBIS!

AT all times, O Mary! you have been the helper, the protecting arm of the disciples of your Son, and of the Church their

(1) Orat. 2 de dormit. Deip.
(2) Ephes. iii. 18.
(3) Job xxxi. 18.
(4) Ecclus. l. 6, 7.
(5) Tob. x. 4.
(6) Jer. xvii. 17.

mother; but how wonderfully have you been so, particularly in certain memorable circumstances, where everything seemed to conspire to the destruction of the admirable work of the divine Jesus!

Islamism, in the sixteenth century, threatened to invade Europe, and subvert Christianity. A formidable fleet displayed itself proudly, under the flag of the crescent, in the gulf of Lepanto; the vessels of the faithful, although inferior in number, did not hesitate to form, under your auspices, before it in order of battle, and John of Austria, their commander, makes a vow to go in person to visit your august sanctuary of Loretto. Meanwhile, the city of Rome heard within its walls solemn processions of the Rosary addressing to you the most earnest supplications for the success of the Catholic army. On a sudden, the holy Pope Pius V. exclaims, to your glory, "The Christian fleet has conquered . . . ." In fact, official news was soon received of the complete defeat of the Mussulmans; and in memory of so magnificent a testimony of your protection, the same holy Pontiff enriched the litany, which we love to sing in your honour, with this new invocation, "*Help of Christians, pray for us!*" . . . . This beautiful title, O Mary! you have been pleased to justify many times, since that immortal day of Lepanto.

Under the ramparts of Vienna, in the seventeenth century, two hundred and thirty thousand Turkish soldiers were defeated by a Christian army incomparably less numerous; and it was within the octave of your nativity, the very day when solemn supplications were put up in the city of Munich to the *Help of Christians;* and the honour of that brilliant triumph was referred to you by the conqueror himself, who, having assisted at the holy Sacrifice that morning, and partaken of the divine mysteries, had encouraged his officers by promising them the aid of heaven, through your intercession.

Thirty years after, the Emperor Charles VI. gains a signal victory over the same enemies of the Christian name, on the day when at Rome your protection, O divine Virgin! was implored in our behalf; and again, soon after, on the octave day of your

glorious Assumption, Corfu blesses you for seeing those infidels who had besieged it, fly far from its ramparts.

Admirable series of victories gained by Mary over the crescent! They will live for ever in the grateful heart of all the pious faithful, who owe to them the consolation of celebrating, every year, the solemnity of the holy Rosary, throughout the whole extent of the Catholic world!

But this was not enough for the glory of the most holy Virgin: it was the will of Providence that her title of *Help of Christians* should be consecrated by a special festival. In his long and sorrowful struggle with the most formidable prince and captain of modern times, Pope Pius VII. had never ceased to invoke this heavenly helper. His confidence was not deceived. Napoleon, that powerful colossus, fell; the venerable old man was enabled to re-enter in triumph the eternal city; and he was pleased that the anniversary of his return from captivity should be annually solemnized by the special feast of Mary the *Help of Christians.*

Yes, O constant help, powerful help, universal help! Help against the force of arms; help against the violence of political power; help against persecutions; help in all the storms that hell can raise against the Church of God upon earth, and which tend to retard her precious conquests, to diminish the number of the faithful, and drag down a multitude of souls to their destruction. Let us invoke, every day, with fresh fervour, the helping Virgin, that she may avert all these dangers. But we must also implore her for ourselves, for our confirmation in faith and in virtue; for our perseverance against the scandals of all kinds which encompass us; for it is written: "Let him that stands take heed lest he fall."[1] Let us then address ourselves to her with all the confidence that she deserves. "Everything obeys her empire,"[2] says St. Antoninus; "Your name alone is all-powerful, next to God," exclaims St. Bonaventure![3]

(1) 1 Cor. x. 12. (2) Serm. 61.
(3) In Cant. 4.

O Mary! "invincible shield"[1] of Christians, you who have manifested so conspicuously the protection which you accord to them, to you, much more than to the illustrious Judith, is it appropriate to say: "Woe be to the nation that riseth up against my people! for the Lord Almighty will take revenge on them."[2] Be you glorified for ever, for having "broken *in our favour* the powers of bows,"[3] and given us motives so consoling to hope in you against all the enemies of the children of God and of his holy Church. With her we delight to say to you: "Holy Mary, succour the miserable, help the faint-hearted, comfort the sorrowful, pray for the people, entreat for the clergy, intercede for the devoted female sex: may all experience your aid who celebrate your holy commemoration"[4] with happiness, and implore you with sweet and filial confidence.

HELP OF CHRISTIANS, PRAY FOR US!
Auxilium Christianorum, ora pro nobis!

MEDITATION XLVI.

REGINA ANGELORUM, ORA PRO NOBIS!

LET us soar up, on the wings of faith, to that immortal country where "God himself is the infinite reward"[5] of *the elect*, and gives to each one according to his merit;[6] what shall we there see? The thrones of pontiffs, those of martyrs, those of apostles, those of prophets, those of patriarchs; and our eyes will contemplate with rapture so much grandeur and glory. But there in vain shall we seek for Mary. Let us ascend still higher; here are the choirs of angels: the cherubim and seraphim, all those

(1) Wisd. v. 20.
(2) Judith xvi. 20.
(3) Ps. lxxv. 4.
(4) Sancta Maria, succurre miseris, etc.
(5) Gen. xv. 1.
(6) St. Matt. xvi. 27.

"thousands of thousands"[1] of pure spirits, which shine resplendent before the "Holy of holies,"[2] like unquenchable suns; is it there that the Virgin by pre-eminence enjoys beatitude? No, no: higher yet, above the angels and archangels, close to the adorable throne of the Man-God risen from the dead, another throne will strike our bewildered senses, another throne, less elevated indeed than that of Jesus, but higher than those of all the other inhabitants of heaven; and on this throne, a daughter of Eve clothed with glory less dazzling than that of Jesus, but richer and more splendid than even that of the highest angels of the celestial hierarchy: it is the most holy Virgin Mary, it is the greatest work of the Creator, it is the *Queen of* all the *Angels.*

"She is, in reality," says St. Epiphanius, "above all beings, God alone excepted."[3] "Her dignity as Mother of our Creator," says St. John Damascen, "makes her the Queen of all creatures."[4] "She who has the right to call God her Son," exclaims St. Bernard, "can she fail to be superior to all the choirs of angels? O pay homage, pay homage, ye heavenly spirits, to the Mother of your divine King, you who adore the blessed fruit of our beloved Virgin!"[5] "Jesus has placed on her head," says again St. Antoninus, "a diadem of magnificence and glory, which subjects all the angels to this divine Queen."[6]

And was it not this greatness and future glory of the most Blessed Virgin, which the Archangel Gabriel honoured by anticipation, when he saluted her with so much veneration, and in terms so pompous and magnificent? Terms of veneration and honour most justly due to her, who was to be invested with the admirable title of beloved daughter of the Father, beloved Mother of the Son, beloved Spouse of the Holy Ghost, and at whose feet the sublime rank to which she was to be raised by the divine maternity placed all the grandeurs of heaven and earth! How, indeed, could the messenger of the Most High have failed to

(1) Dan. vii. 10.
(2) Dan. ix. 24.
(3) De laud. Virg.
(4) Lib. 4 Fid. orthod., c. 15.
(5) Hom. i. super Missus est.
(6) Serm. de Assumpt.

recognise "his queen, in her whom *he saluted* as Mother of his divine King?"[1] And if the angels are infinitely below the human nature of the Word incarnate—for "to which of the angels," says St. Paul, "hath He said at any time, *as to Jesus*, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?"[2]—how could they fail to be below her, who could herself also say to that same Jesus, "Thou art my Son;[3] . . . . I bore thee nine months in my womb, and gave thee suck, . . . and nourished thee?"[4]

But who, then, is this creature so privileged, before whom all the angels bow down, full of respect, struck with admiration; this creature to whom they are eager to "minister,"[5] repeating with holy transport, "Rule thou over us, and thy Son!"[6] . . . O it is the humble daughter of Ann and Joachim; it is the young obscure virgin, lately espoused to a poor artisan; it is the young Mother, so worthy of compassion, who found at Bethlehem nothing better than a stable, a manger, a little straw, in which to lay her new-born Son; who was compelled to banish herself to a distance in a foreign land, to preserve the precious life of her adorable Child; who lived ever simple, ever hidden, even after the resurrection and glorious ascension of her divine Son. The path of glory, of solid glory, of glory alone worthy of the name, of glory eternal, is therefore the way of humility in this world. To be little in the eyes of others, little in our own eyes, and great in the sight of the Lord, by a high degree of virtue, without artificial adornment and without show, that is the precious secret which Mary teaches us by her whole life, as Jesus teaches it to us by his divine lessons and his divine example, which he still keeps before our eyes in the ineffable mystery of the Eucharist. Let us imitate him, let us imitate his divine Mother, let us know how to humble ourselves, so to be one day eternally exalted.[7]

"Hail, Queen of angels! hail Sovereign of angels!"[8] What is there, next to God, greater than you, who received into your

(1) St. Athanasius, Serm. de Deip.
(2) Heb. i. 5.
(3) Heb. i. 5.
(4) 2 Macc. vii. 27.
(5) Dan. vii. 10.
(6) Judg. viii. 22.
(7) St. Matt. xxiii. 12.
(8) Ave Regina.

womb Infinite Majesty, and to whom that Majesty condescended to submit. "Miracles on either side!" says St. Bernard, most justly; "in the Son, a miracle of humility; in the Mother, a miracle of elevation and greatness!"[1] O from the height of your sublime throne, do not forget your servants upon earth; look down rather upon them with sweet complacency and benevolent love, as upon unfortunate brethren and children. Deign to assist us, and support us continually in the way of salvation, till our departure out of this world of trial; vouchsafe afterwards to obtain for us to be visited and consoled by our good angels, if the divine justice should condemn us to the temporary fire of expiation, and obtain that we may soon be conducted to heaven. May we merit these inestimable favours, while we repeat to you at all times, with sincere piety,—

QUEEN OF ANGELS, PRAY FOR US!
Regina angelorum, ora pro nobis!

MEDITATION XLVII.

REGINA PATRIARCHARUM, ORA PRO NOBIS!

UPON earth the patriarchs had "beheld afar off and saluted"[2] with a lively faith, a sweet and firm hope, that wonderful woman, whom the Lord had announced from the beginning, as being one day to give birth to the Saviour of the world. In heaven, they offer to her with immeasurable joy the tribute of their veneration and tender love, as to her who, through Jesus, introduced them into the "eternal tabernacles."[3]

Adam, the first of all, admires and blesses in Mary the new Eve, the true "mother of the living,"[4] whose "foot has crushed

(1) Homil. 1, super Missus est.
(2) Heb. xi. 13.
(3) St. Luke xvi. 9.
(4) Gen. iii. 20.

the head of the *infernal* serpent,"[1] the seducer of the first Eve; of her whose primitive fall the divine Son came to repair in a manner so wonderful that the Church could exclaim, in a pious transport of gratitude: "O happy fault! which deserved to possess such and so great a Redeemer!"[2]

Next to Adam, Noe, chosen formerly to be as it were the second father of the human race, which was condemned to perish by the deluge, contemplates with rapture her whom the Church calls "our life and our hope;"[3] Abraham, who did not hesitate of old to sacrifice to God his only son, on whose life naturally depended the existence of the people destined to produce the Messias, honours and praises with holy transport the Mother of that adorable only Son, of whom Isaac was the figure,[4] and in whom "all the nations of the earth have been blessed,"[5] *according* to the promise of the Lord. Next, it is Jacob who celebrates the glory of this supereminent Virgin, of whom was born upon the earth "the salvation of the Lord,"[6] which had been the object of his most ardent desires. Then it is Joseph, "the saviour of Egypt,"[7] who renders solemn homage to the Mother of "the Saviour of the world,"[8] of whom his innocence, misfortunes, and elevation had so well prefigured the holiness, the sufferings, and the glory; it is Moses who admires and extols her, who gave to the world "the divine Prophet like unto him,"[9] like him a lawgiver, a worker of miracles and a deliverer; in a word, all the holy patriarchs, "the chief fathers and heads of their families, *blessed by the Lord, who now* dwell in the *heavenly* Jerusalem,"[10] who are delighted to acknowledge that through her the immortal crown encircles their radiant brows, and who say to her, with one accord, "The sceptre of thy kingdom is a sceptre of uprightness; . . . . thy right hand shall conduct thee wonderfully!"[11]

(1) Gen. iii. 15. (2) Roman Missal, Holy Saturday.
(3) Salve Regina. (4) Heb. xi. 19.
(5) Gen. xxii. 17, 18. (6) Gen. xlix. 18.
(7) Gen. xli. 45. (8) St. John iv. 42.
(9) Deut. xviii. 15, 18. (10) 1 Paralip. viii 28.
11) Ps. xliv. 7.

But what has merited for them this inestimable crown? . . . . their fidelity to God, their faith in a Redeemer to come, "and their desire to see the day of his coming shine forth"[1]—fidelity, faith, desire, which in the heart of the most holy Virgin, before the happy message which she received from above, had already risen to a degree of perfection inexpressible. If, in fact, the faith and fidelity of Abraham, for example, had increased to a prodigy, what must have been those of Mary, so far elevated in heaven above that holy patriarch,—in heaven, where each one has the rank which he has deserved? If the desire to see Christ come down upon earth had become so strong in the heart of Abraham, that Jesus praised him solemnly for it at Jerusalem,[2] how great must have been the flame of the same desire in the soul of her, of whom St. Proclus has said that "no patriarch can in any way be compared to her."[3]

For our part (O ineffable happiness!) we have not to desire, we have only to enjoy; we do not merely taste the consolations of sweet hope, but we possess all the delicious fruits of the reality. Jesus is "descended from heaven;[4] he has visited" *the earth;*[5] he has enlightened and sanctified it, he has saved it, he has endowed it with the most magnificent gifts, and the most precious spiritual resources. But he has done much more, he has fixed his abode "in this valley of tears,"[6] which doubtless would have been only too happy to possess him for a few years, or even moments. . . . . Alas! and we are indifferent to his adorable and continual presence; and we neglect to visit this divine guest, who seems to forget himself to make it his "delight to be with the children of men."[7] O let it no longer be true to say of us what St. John Baptist said of the Jews, in the time of our divine Jesus, "There hath stood One in the midst of you whom you know not."[8]

(1) St. John viii. 56.
(2) St. John viii. 56.
(3) Orat. 5 in S. Deip.
(4) St. John iii. 13.
(5) St. Luke i. 78.
(6) Salve Reg.
(7) Prov. viii. 31.
(8) St. John i. 26.

O Mary! "sweet hope of the patriarchs,"[1] you, who so intimately possessed him whom they had so much desired, make us appreciate the infinite happiness which we have in possessing ourselves, and being able to enjoy all those graces, of which he is the inexhaustible source. As the Messias to come had been the centre of your most ardent desires, the Messias actually come was the centre of all your affections; and he was, under your auspices, the sole object of the love and devotion of those illustrious founders of religious orders, whom piety styles the patriarchs of the New Testament. May it be so with us, O divine Mother! May our faith, above all, be animated in our hearts in so lively a degree as to make us see and feel that by the adorable mystery of the continual presence of Jesus in the midst of us, "earth becomes to us a heaven,"[2] and that to the Eucharist all our thoughts, desires, and affections ought to turn! That we may faithfully accomplish this pious duty, to the glory of your divine Son,—

QUEEN OF PATRIARCHS, PRAY FOR US!
Regina patriarcharum, ora pro nobis!

MEDITATION XLVIII.

REGINA PROPHETARUM, ORA PRO NOBIS!

THE prophets, as living prodigies of supernatural knowledge, traced out long ago the most perfect picture of the Messias, many ages beforehand. "The most ancient made, as it were, the first sketch of him; those who came after them finished, in succession, those traits which were left imperfect by their predecessors. The nearer they approached to the event, the more lively were their colours; and when the picture was finished, the last, as he retired,

(1) St. Ephrem, de Laud. B. V. (2) St. Chrysost., Hom. 24 in 1 Cor.

pointed out the holy precursor, who was to say,—'Behold the Lamb of God; laden with the sins of the world!'"[1]

But in depicting the divers phases of the mortal life of our Saviour, the several characters of his person and ministry, the wonderful fruits of his mission, could they fail to obtain a glimpse of the august Mother of this Man-God, that admirable daughter of Eve, whose glorious co-operation in the salvation of the world they knew that the Lord had announced at the beginning of the world?[2] O, without doubt, the sweet and majestic figure of Mary made them more than once leap for joy, while they wrote the prophetic history of her divine Son; and how much must you especially have been moved, you David,[3] Ezechiel,[4] Isaias,[5] to whom were made known by special lights the greatness of the Virgin Mother!

Now that in the abode of eternal glory, they behold clearly her destiny so brilliant and so magnificent, her dazzling crown as the "universal sovereign of all creatures,"[6] with what joy do they pay homage to their heavenly Queen! With what veneration do they honour the excellence of the divine light with which the Lord favoured her!

Each prophet, in fact, had been supernaturally enlightened on some points only of the history of our Redeemer; and you, O Queen of prophets, you embraced the whole series of their predictions, you penetrated their meaning, according to the thought of St. Alphonsus;[7] you saw with your eyes, you heard with your ears, what they had so much desired to see and hear.[8] The prophets, animated with the holy fire of inspiration, had risen to an elevation of thoughts and of expression, which strikes, charms, and ravishes us in their writings; and you, filled with the Holy Ghost,[9] with your spirit rejoicing in God your Saviour,[10]

(1) Letters of M. Drack, a converted rabbin.
(2) Gen. iii. 15.
(3) Ps. xliv. 11, 12.
(4) Ezech. xliv. 2.
(5) Isa. vii. 14.
(6) St. John Damascen, lib. 4 de fide orthod.
(7) Serm. on the Dolours of Mary.
(8) St. Luke x. 24.
(9) Ibid. i. 35.
(10) Ibid. i. 47.

sung a hymn to his glory, a hymn of thanksgiving, in which are displayed a richness of feeling, a sublimity of expression, a divine enthusiasm, which those oracles of the Most High do not equal. You foretold—you, an humble and poor daughter of the tribe of Juda—you the obscure spouse of an obscure and indigent artisan of Nazareth, that "all generations should call you blessed:"[1] a prophecy the most astonishing, which all nations and ages have continually fulfilled for eighteen centuries. You foretold also the future destiny of the Church, of the true people of God, of the true Israel, whom the Lord has taken under his protection, "being mindful of his mercy. As he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed for ever:"[2] and perpetual combats, the perpetual triumphs of the Church, have never ceased to bear witness to the divine intelligence which enabled you to read them beforehand.

"How happy are we," observes here the great Bishop of Meaux, "that God should have deigned to bind himself thus to us by promises! He could have given us what he pleased; but why did he promise it to us, unless, as Mary declared, to continue his mercy from age to age,"[3] manifested so admirably by the coming of our Saviour, who has himself promised to preserve his work to "the end of the world?"[4] Let us rest with unshaken faith on his divine word: "heaven and earth shall pass away, but his word shall not pass away."[5] Let us avail ourselves of the faithful accomplishment of the prophecy of Mary, and the promise of her divine Son, from the cradle of Christianity to our own times, to strengthen our confidence in all the other words of the holy Gospel; and let us give ourselves up with entire confidence to the blessed promises of faith, in which we ought to "drown all the deceitful hopes with which the world diverts us."[6]

Formerly, O Mary! in the ecstacy of your gratitude towards the Lord, the future was opened to your view, and you announced

(1) Ibid. i. 48.
(2) Ibid. 54, 55.
(3) Elev. sur les Myst.
(4) St. Matt. xxviii. 20.
(5) Ibid. xxiv. 35.
(6) Bossuet, Elev. sur les Myst.

the pious and solemn veneration of which you were to be the object on the part of "all generations,"[1] and the perpetuity of the Church, which is to live and combat and triumph "to the end of the world."[2] O it is with sweet consolation that we behold the wonderful accomplishment of your words, during so long a series of ages; it is with lively joy that we recognise in you, with St. Basil, her whom Isaias had designated under the title of "prophetess,"[3] and to whom the "seers"[4] of Israel "give testimony"[5] in their predictions relating to the divine Redeemer. Deign, O you whom David calls the "king's daughter, . . . in golden borders, clothed round about with varieties,"[6] deign to obtain for us that we may ever mingle our feeble voices with the universal concert which proclaims you "blessed;"[7] that we may rely upon the infallible oracles of the Gospel; that we may never suffer ourselves to be shaken, either by scandals, or by persecutions, but may "persevere *faithfully* to the end,"[8] in that faith, and in those works which it alone inspires.

QUEEN OF PROPHETS, PRAY FOR US!
Regina prophetarum, ora pro nobis!

MEDITATION XLIX.

REGINA APOSTOLORUM, ORA PRO NOBIS!

WHAT philosophers the most renowned for learning, what the most eloquent orators, what the most powerful and able men had never even had the thought of undertaking—what they never would have succeeded in executing, twelve poor unlearned

(1) St. Luke i. 48.
(2) St. Matt. xxviii. 20.
(3) In Isa. *prophet.*, c. 8.
(4) Isa. xxx. 10.
(5) Acts x. 43.
(6) Ps. xliv. 15.
(7) St. Luke i. 48.
(8) St. Matt. x. 22.

Galileans dared to attempt, without any human resources, and realized with success inconceivable. The apostles divided the world among them to conquer it, to establish "throughout the world a new religion, a new sacrifice, a new law, having for its author Jesus crucified at Jerusalem. And in order to gain the minds of men, Come, they say, come and serve Jesus; whoever gives himself up to him shall be happy after his death; in the meantime, we must endure every extremity of suffering."[1] And, to preach this doctrine, they brave torments, and even death itself; and they "draw all things to themselves,"[2] and in a short time the pagan world adores Jesus, and practises the Gospel.

Zeal divine, devotedness divine, success divine undoubtedly! But what share had Mary in that great work, to merit the title of *Queen of Apostles?* O that august Virgin, who by the sole pre-eminence of her divine maternity would have a claim to that title, did wonderfully contribute to the formation, increase, and support of the infant Church.

Do we not see her, from the beginning, during that pious retreat, by which the apostles were disposed to "receive the power of the Holy Ghost,"[3] do we not see her "persevering with them in prayer?"[4] "And who could suppose," says St. Antoninus, "that she did not receive, together with them, on the day of Pentecost, the wonderful gifts with which they were all enriched by the Holy Ghost, that nothing should be wanting to her of all graces, and all spiritual advantages which she could possess?"[5] "Yes, certainly," says St. Thomas, "the Blessed Virgin received in an eminent degree the gift of wisdom, the gift of miracles, and the gift of prophecy."[6] Doubtless she was not to exercise the ministry of the apostles; but all these graces were granted to her as an ornament due to the dignity of Mother of God: could such a Mother remain inferior in anything compatible with her sex to those who were called "the servants of

(1) Bossuet, Panegyr. de S. André.
(2) St. John xii. 32.
(3) St. Luke xxiv. 49. Acts i. 8.
(4) Acts i. 14.
(5) 4 Part. Tit. 15, c. 19.
(6) 3 Part. q. 27, Art. 5.

Jesus,"[1] and of whom St. Anselm and St. Bonaventure have not hesitated to say "that they were the disciples of her who had given him birth?"[2]

And, in fact, it was Mary who was to reveal to the apostles all the circumstances of those mysteries which they had not been able to witness, and which in their turn they were to make known to the world; it was she who was to communicate to them the most precious and consoling details of the hidden life of Jesus; for "she had kept all these things, pondering them in her heart," according to the words of the Gospel,[3] as Venerable Bede says, "in order to impart them, when the time should come, to the apostles and evangelists."[4] And how can we doubt that she was to them a source of light, when St. Ambrose has said that "St. John, that sublime eagle, derived from her the exalted and admirable conceptions which he had of the divinity of the Word?"[5]

But she merits also the title of *Queen of Apostles*, by her happy influence over the progress of the Gospel. Her example was a powerful preaching; was she not, in everything, the most faithful image of the divine Jesus, "the most brilliant mirror of his life?"[6] says St. Laurence Justinian. Her discourses had a wonderful efficacity: it is written that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,"[7] and the heart of Mary was, says St. Bernardin, "a furnace of divine love."[8] Her prayers were aspirations at once the purest, the most humble, and most ardent; and how can we express with what zeal and fervour that divine Mother besought of Heaven the development of the great work of her adorable Son?

To imitate Mary, let us co-operate, as far as we can, to the good of the Church, and the success of those pious missionaries,

(1) St. James i. 1. 2 St. Peter i. 1. St. Jude 1.
(2) St. Anselm, de Concept. Virg., c. 27. St. Bonav. in psalt. min. in prec.
(3) St. Luke ii. 19. (4) Homil. in Luc., cap. 2.
(5) Lib. de instit. Virg., c. 7. Præf. in Joan.
(6) De triumph. agon. Christ. (7) St. Matt. xii. 34.
(8) Serm. 9 de Visit.

who continue the work of the first apostles. Let us be ourselves apostles, by our example, our discourse, our co-operation in good works, so that "by us, the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified."[1] O Mary! whom Jesus left upon earth, after his glorious ascension, to exercise there a more than apostolic zeal, and to be there "the prop and support of his Church;"[2] you who not only shared in all the gifts which the apostles received from heaven, but who were their light and their model, O how justly are you named the Queen of "these twelve *heroes*, whose names are written in the foundations of the city of God!"[3] May your heart, so ardent for the glory of Jesus, communicate to ours some spark of that sacred fire, which devout souls seek to spread incessantly around them! Obtain, at least, that "by a good conversation,"[4] we may be like torches giving light to our brethren, and leading them to "glorify our Father who is in heaven!"[5]

QUEEN OF APOSTLES, PRAY FOR US!
Regina apostolorum, ora pro nobis!

MEDITATION L.

REGINA MARTYRUM, ORA PRO NOBIS!

WHO will give us here to lament in proportion to your sorrows? O Mary! how truly were you able to say to men, when your sorrow was "great as the sea,[6]—O all you that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow!"[7]

The sight of bloodshed fills us with horror; our nature cannot coldly see the blood of one of our fellow-creatures flow by violence; it suffers cruelly if it be that of a friend; much more if it be that

(1) 2 Thess. i. 12. (2) Bossuet, Serm. sur l'Assompt.
(3) Apoc. xxi. 10, 14. (4) St. James iii. 13.
(5) St. Matt. v. 16. (6) Lament. ii. 13. (7) Ibid. i. 12.

of a brother; more, O much more still, if it be that of a son, and of a deserving son, a son tenderly cherished! But if it is the heart of the most tender of mothers that is condemned to that sad spectacle, how much more lively and sorrowful is the impression! And if the son whom she sees sacrificed is an only son, endowed with the rarest qualities, O no human words can express the extreme degree of that moral suffering!

You were that Mother, O Mary! Jesus was that only Son, truly incomparable, at whose ignominious execution you had to assist! O you whom the Church so well names "the sorrowful Mother,"[1] tell us,—for we can neither feel nor express it ourselves,—tell us "how sharp a sword pierced your heart,"[2] at each one of those cruel strokes which drove the nails into the hands and feet of your Jesus; tell us what was your anguish, what dreadful and prolonged agony was yours, when, for three hours, you had to contemplate this most amiable Son so horribly fastened to an infamous gibbet; or rather be silent, O divine Mary! O keep that silence so heroic, so eloquent, so sublime, self-imposed by your immense grief upon Calvary! that superhuman silence tells us more, infinitely more, than all the cries, all the groans, all the sobs of a desolate mother. . . . O how willingly would you have given your life for his life! What consolation would you have felt in at least mingling your blood with his blood! But no, you were to be "more than a martyr," according to the reflection of St. Bernard[3] and St. Bonaventure,[4] by suffering all that naturally must have taken away your life, with the certainty that death would not come to put an end to your inexpressible torture. Thus it was that you were gloriously to merit the title of Queen of martyrs, by the unheard-of excess of your sufferings, before which St. Anselm "esteems as light those of the other heroes of Christianity,"[5] who, nevertheless, "had trial of mockeries and stripes, moreover also of bands and pri-

(1) Stabat. (2) St. Luke ii. 35.
(3) Serm. 12 de Prærogativis, B. M. V. (4) In Spec., lect. 4.
(5) De excellent Virg., c. 5.

sons: they were stoned, they were cut asunder, *they were tormented in every way, they* of whom the world was not worthy."[1]

But Calvary was not the sole theatre of the martyrdom of the most holy Virgin. When the sacred body of our Saviour had been taken down from the cross, tradition informs us that it was placed in her hands, previously to its being laid in the sepulchre. O who could conceive what must have passed in the heart of such a Mother at this moment so sadly solemn? To hold in her arms the lifeless body of her beloved Son, that body bruised and torn so cruelly! To contemplate, with her eyes full of love, the deep wounds by which that blood so precious and so cherished had flowed out to regenerate the world; to represent to herself in the most lively manner all the dreadful scenes of the passion, O what torture! St. Augustin says "that all the sorrows of Jesus had been endured also by Mary; and that the cross and nails of the Son had been the cross and nails of the Mother."[2] Therefore at that moment all that she had felt before, all that had rent and broken her tender heart was renewed, but with double bitterness, extreme desolation, unequalled and unqualified suffering.

A great lesson for all of us children of the Gospel! Jesus and Mary entered into eternal glory through pains and sufferings; Jesus, who was holiness itself! Mary, the most holy of created beings! And we, sinners by nature, wilful sinners, shall we attempt to arrive thither by another way? The cross, that is the inheritance which the Man-God has left us in this world, and which is to become to us as the assured pledge of that "inheritance incorruptible and undefiled,"[3] which he promises to our resignation, to our patience, and to our fidelity in trials; for it is written, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him."[4]

O tender Mother! who endured, at the foot of the cross, sufferings much more cruel than bodily martyrdom; O you, whose example and prayer must have so happily encouraged those who "overcame . . . . by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word

(1) Heb. xi. 36—38. (2) Serm. de Pass. Dom.
(3) 1 St. Peter i. 4. (4) 2 Tim. ii. 12.

of the testimony,"[1] and in whose name the glorious St. Stephen offers you his palm and his crown, deign to compassionate our pains, and support our weakness. Turn away from us the chalice, if it is to be too bitter for our feeble virtue; or else obtain for us to say courageously to God with our Saviour, "Thy will be done!"[2] Obtain for us to understand well that great word of our divine Master, that "whosoever doth not carry his cross and come after *him*, cannot be *his* disciple;"[3] and that we may have the happiness always to possess our souls in patience.[4]

QUEEN OF MARTYRS, PRAY FOR US!
Regina martyrum, ora pro nobis!

MEDITATION LI.

REGINA CONFESSORUM, ORA PRO NOBIS!

GLORY be to you, noble confessors of the faith, who accounted it a precious gain[5] to avow yourselves openly disciples of Jesus before the enemies of his name, at the peril of your lives! Glory be to you who, when Providence did not put you to such trials, still made profession of belonging to that adorable Master, by the practice of all the Gospel virtues, and by the eminent sanctity of your lives! But much more, very much more than to you, glory be to Mary, your august Queen by so many titles.

You indeed showed yourselves constantly the devoted servants of our divine Saviour; but did not Mary continue more intimately and more courageously faithful to her divine Son? Your heart was penetrated with an ardent and generous love of him; but was not Mary inflamed with a fire truly incomparable? You braved, for his sake, affronts, dangers, and contradictions of every

(1) Apoc. xii. 11. (2) St. Matt. xxvi. 42.
(3) St. Luke xiv. 27. (4) St. Luke xxi. 19.
(5) Phil. i. 21.

kind; but did not Mary share in all the painful situations of the mortal life of her Son, and all the persecutions of which he was the object? How many times was he calumniated and injuriously treated by his enemies! How often must the unjust treatment and the insults prodigally heaped upon the Son have cruelly recoiled upon the Mother! See with what a tone of mockery those expressed themselves who refused to believe in Jesus: "Is not his mother called Mary?"[1] Hear also how even in the extremity of his tortures the enemies of the adorable sufferer cast upon him derision, contempt, and bravadoes the most audacious; must not Mary, standing at the foot of the infamous gibbet, have been mixed up by them with him in the same sentiments of hatred, and the same insults?

Amidst all the injurious language, and all the blasphemous sarcasms with which the enemies of your divine Son make the air resound, O Mary! "*O woman above all women, the honour and glory of your sex,* great is your faith!"[2] How admirable are your love and your devotion! All the apostles of Jesus, with the exception of St. John, have abandoned him; their head, Peter himself, who had so loudly protested that he would be faithful to him even unto death, has three times, and with an oath, refused to acknowledge him; and you, in face of all the fury of the Jews, in presence of the executioners all covered with the blood of your Son, you display the heroism of your great soul, you surround their victim with all your adoration, with all your love and devotion, when heaven itself appears to forsake him! Who then can be compared to you, O Mary! O you whose faith in our divine Redeemer was so magnanimous?

And who, moreover, ever equalled this divine Virgin in the sublime practice of all those virtues which can characterise a holy soul, and make her life, as it were, an eloquent preaching of the Gospel; or in the possession of those precious gifts which assign an eminent rank in heaven? Purity, modesty, humility, meekness, disengagement, poverty, obedience, piety, ardent love of

(1) St. Matt. xiii. 55. (2) St. Matt. xv. 28.

God, inexhaustible charity for our neighbour, burning zeal for the glory of the Most High, perfect submission to his adorable will, absolute self-abandonment to his Providence, patience under every trial: in a word, all virtues, and in the highest degree, shone forth in Mary. Hence St. Peter Chrysologus calls her "the living assemblage of all the treasures of sanctity;"[1] and St. John Damascen, "the sanctuary of all virtues."[2]

Let us learn of this admirable Queen of all confessors to despise human respect, and to live like worthy disciples of Jesus Christ. Amidst the sarcasms of the world, let us lift up our heads and the noble sign of the cross with which our foreheads were marked in Baptism and Confirmation; let us brave, with holy courage, the disdain and the threats of "the children of the world,"[3] remembering that infallible oracle of him who will judge them as well as us, "He that shall confess me before men, I will confess him before my Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven."[4] Nor let us forget that serious admonition of our divine Master—"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and may glorify your Father who is in heaven!"[5]

O august Virgin, before whose throne the confessors of the faith of Jesus fall prostrate to pay you homage, some offering you the "crowns"[6] which, under your auspices, they have worn to his greater glory; others, that heavenly "wisdom" which has shone in their writings or in their good works, and which they had received from your sweet patronage;[7] O you, who "in all *your* works gave thanks to the holy One, and to the Most High, with words of glory,"[8] obtain for us the grace to "fight the good fight of faith,"[9] in the midst of the wicked and corrupt world which surrounds us. You who were at all times the most perfect model

(1) Serm. 146.
(2) Lib. iv., De fide orthod.
(3) St. Luke xvi. 8.
(4) St. Matt. x. 32, 33.
(5) St. Matt. v. 16.
(6) Apoc. iv. 10.
(7) Deut. xxxiii. 3.
(8) Ecclus. xlvii. 9.
(9) 1 Tim. vi. 12.

of all the evangelical virtues, obtain for us that we may render our faith honourable by our works, " lest the name of the Lord and *his* doctrine be blasphemed,"[1] but, on the contrary, that " by doing well, *we* may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men,"[2] and that " considering *us* by our good works, they may give glory to God in the day of visitation ;"[3] with whom we earnestly entreat you to grant us your kind intercession.

QUEEN OF CONFESSORS, PRAY FOR US!
Regina confessorum, ora pro nobis!

MEDITATION LII.

REGINA VIRGINUM, ORA PRO NOBIS!

YES, you are the *Queen of virgins,* O admirable Mary, who, first among all the daughters of Eve, and in spite of the opposite prejudice of your nation, " made to the Lord the solemn promise of perpetual chastity!"[4] You, according to the expressions of St. Ambrose, " raised the standard of virginity ;"[5] you carried the evangelical virtue to such perfection, that St. John Damascen calls you " the treasure of virginal purity."[6]

And certainly it should have been so in her who was destined to an incomprehensible greatness. " Incorruption bringeth near to God,"[7] says the Holy Ghost himself, in the book of Wisdom. It must have been, then, sufficiently perfect in Mary to render her as worthy as possible of " the closest alliance with a person of

(1) 1 Tim. vi. 1. (2) 1 St. Peter ii. 15.
(3) 1 St. Peter v. 12.
(4) St. Aug., Ser. 20 de temp. Tract. 10 in Joan. S. Greg. of Nyssa, Orat. de Nat. Dom. Ven. Bede, in c. i. Luc. St. Anselm, de excel. Virg. c. 4. St. Bernard, Ser. 2, sup. Missus.
(5) Lib. de instit. Virg. (6) Hom. 6, cont. Nestor.
(7) Wisd. vi. 20.

infinite majesty:"[1]—"an alliance so admirable," says Albert the Great, "that Mary could not have been more intimately united to the Divinity, without being identified with it!"[2]

But it is not only on this marvellous account that all the virgins salute Mary by the name of Queen in heaven. Was she not to them, upon earth, a safeguard, as well as an encouragement and model? O they felt the value of purity when they saw that it was to a virgin that the ineffable privilege of the divine maternity was reserved; they understood the prodigious honour which God showed to their sex, in the person of Mary, and the immense benefit of restoration which was derived through her to the Christian female; and their heart felt the need of testifying its gratitude to the Lord for it, by devoting itself "to please God"[3] and love him alone in the world, or to contemplate and praise him in solitude, or to serve him in the persons of the poor and afflicted. And who could enumerate the thousands of admirable traits of virtue, which illustrated those ceaseless generations of virgins since the commencement of the Church? How often has the earth beheld with astonishment the youthful and timid daughters of Mary not shrinking nor turning pale at any danger, before any obstacle, any scourge, any threat, any punishment! . . . . Every day, moreover, how many religious congregations come forth and say, oftentimes even at the peril of their lives, to every human evil, "Be thou my father and my brethren;" to every infirmity, to all necessities of mind and body, "Be you my mother and my sisters!" O noble and sublime spiritual posterity of the divine Virgin; it is she who protects you and supports you, to "present you as chaste virgins to Christ,"[4] both against the weakness of your sex, and the seductions of the world, and the assaults of hell, and, when necessary, against executioners, and all the instruments of their cruelty! The Church puts into her mouth those words of the book of Proverbs: "I love them that

(1) St. Thomas, p. 1, q. 25, a. 6. (2) Sup. Missus est., c. 180.
(3) 1 Cor. vii. 32.
(4) 2 Cor. xi. 2.

love me."[1] But is not the greatest testimony of love which could be given to her the imitation of that virtue which shone most in her, and which, to our fallen nature, is the most difficult? Is it not the vow which you made, like her, to live "like to the angels,"[2] in a mortal body?

It is in this same vow that the spirit of devotion and sacrifice finds its source and its strength; for, in disengaging the heart from family ties, it leaves it at liberty to dedicate all the activity of human nature to the service of God, and good works. She who has no other spouse but Jesus, "thinketh on the things of the Lord: that she may be holy both in body and in spirit."[3] Let us admire this truly heavenly spirit, which produces, in the true Church, wonderful effects, for which so many sects envy her who are sterile because they have separated from her. Let us ask of the divine Jesus that we may have a share, each according to his peculiar vocation, in this zeal of voluntary immolation for his glory, and also to practise, according to our condition, the sublime virtue which, as St. Ambrose expresses it, "makes heroes of martyrdom, and renders us brethren of the angels;"[4] which even raises our merit above that of the heavenly spirits: "for," says St. Jerom, "to acquire the glory of angels in a mortal body is much more than to possess it by nature."[5]

O divine Queen of angels, who come in triumph to offer you the lily of their purity, and the palm of their victory; O august Mother of that divine Lamb who is the leader and "guide of virginity,"[6] with what joy do we glorify you for having, by your example, given rise to and caused to grow so many wonderful virtues upon the earth! O deign to increase, more and more, the number of your cherished daughters, who adorn the Church like splendid flowers, and embalm it with a perfume of sweetness which is not of this world. Vouchsafe to inspire us with respect and love for a virtue which does so much honour to humanity,

(1) Brev. Rom. in festis B. V. Prov. viii. 17.
(2) St. Mark xii. 25. (3) 1 Cor. vii. 34.
(4) Lib. i. de Virg. circa initium. (5) Serm. de Assumpt.
(6) Jerem. iii. 4.

and which "took its origin in heaven,"[1] where it enjoys, as its reward, the special privilege of "following the Lamb whithersoever he goeth."[2] O you, in whose train thousands of virgins have gained unspeakable glory and felicity, obtain that, "drawn"[3] by the celestial perfume of your virtues, we may be "brought to the King,"[4] by following that pure way which your steps have marked out for us!

QUEEN OF VIRGINS, PRAY FOR US!
Regina virginum, ora pro nobis!

MEDITATION LIII.

REGINA SANCTORUM OMNIUM, ORA PRO NOBIS!

THE saints have illustrated the Church by splendid and admirable virtues: they have astonished the world by the heroism of their zeal, their courage, their self-devotedness, and by the prodigies of their humility, patience, and charity; they have entered into the "house of their eternity,"[5] with an abundant harvest of merits, which the Lord has "weighed, *even to the smallest,* in a just balance,[6] *and which he* has rewarded with a recompence inappreciable."[7]

O Mary! you are their Queen: if the saints have been, among the faithful, as so many magnificent flowers which adorned the garden of the Spouse militant of Jesus Christ, in this mystical garden you shone as the Queen of flowers; you displayed conspicuously by your incomparable example, "those immense riches of grace with which you were filled—riches incomprehensible to every human mind, to every angelic spirit!"[8]

(1) St. Ambrose. (2) Apoc. xiv. 4.
(3) Cant. i. 4. (4) Ps. xliv. 15.
(5) Ecclus. xii. 5. (6) Job xxxi. 6.
(7) Heb. x. 35. (8) St. Bernardin, Serm. 5, de Nativ. B.V., c. 12.

The saints were enabled to exhibit in themselves, in a manner more or less sensible, some traits of the life of their divine Master; in each one some particular virtue shone forth, and in the heavenly " Father's house, *where* there are many mansions,"[1] each one receives that portion of special glory which he won during his time of probation.

O Mary! you are their Queen: all the individual merit which each one of them has had, you possessed alone, and in a super-eminent degree; all the traits of Jesus, our adorable model, you expressed in yourself as faithfully as any creature could do; you practised all the virtues, and in so high and perfect a degree, that St. Anselm has said of you, that, "next to the holiness of the Saint of saints none is, or can be conceived like to yours."[2] And now, in the heavenly country, you are invested with glory in proportion to your sublime merit; all the magnificence of the crowns of all the saints form your crown. But this is not all: your glory surpasses all theirs, as much as all their virtues are inferior to yours, and as it is by the merits of him whom you gave to the world that the grace to practise those same virtues was granted to them.

The saints have a wonderful power with God in our favour " The Lord," says St. Leo, " is truly admirable in giving them to us not only as models, but also as protectors full of power."[3] Thousands of splendid facts publish throughout the world " that they reign for ever[4] in the city of God;"[5] and that from the height of their sublime thrones, they reign also by a mysterious influence upon earth.

O Mary! of all these powerful intercessors, of all "these *immortal* kings,"[6] you are also the Queen. You do not pray like them, but "you, in some sense, command: for could it be possible, O Blessed Virgin! for him who was born of you, all powerful as he is, to resist the maternal power which he has

(1) St. John xiv. 2.
(2) De excellent Virg.
(3) In Natali S. Laurent.
(4) Apoc. xxii. 5.
(5) Ibid. iii. 12.
(6) Ibid. v. 10.

given you over himself?"[1] Yes, "your requests are all but commands,"[2] says St. Antoninus; "and what you wish," says St. Anselm, "is infallibly accomplished!"[3]

O may this admirable Virgin, to whom *all saints* offer their crowns, be one day also our *Queen!* What is required for this? To be saints upon earth. But to be a saint is to live "the life of God,"[4] according to the magnificent sentiment of the apostle of the Gentiles; it is to possess his grace, and to labour continually to preserve and increase it within us; it is to love our Creator sincerely, "with all our mind, with our whole heart, and with all our strength:"[5] for he who loves thus is united to him in an ineffable manner; and "if he perseveres, he shall be saved,"[6] he shall become eternally in heaven a "partaker of the divine nature,"[7] of the glory and even beatitude of God. O "let us raise up our hopes," says St. Augustin, "and direct all our desires towards this eternal possession of God, who is the sovereign good and the source of all true goods."[8] Let us take care not to incur the anathema reserved for those "who set at nought the desirable land, so worthy of all the aspirations of our hearts."[9]

O Mary! who united in yourself all the merits of all the saints in a manner so admirable; O you who surpassed them all in this world, by your virtues as well as by your privileges, and who in heaven are superior to them by your glory and power, with them and with all the happy dwellers in the eternal Jerusalem, we bow down before you. August Mother of our Saviour, who are seated on his "right hand, in gilded clothing, surrounded with variety"[10] truly divine! You reign over all the elect, O living "habitation of God!"[11] as "in the top of mountains, and high above the hills."[12] If we considered only your wonderful greatness, we should not dare to lift up our eyes towards you, O heavenly

(1) St. Peter Damian, Serm. de Nat. B. V.
(2) T. 2, in 3 part. lect. 2.
(3) De excell. Virg., c. 12.
(4) Ephes. iv. 18.
(5) St. Luke x. 27.
(6) St. Matt. xxiv. 13.
(7) 2 St. Peter i. 4.
(8) In Ps. 102.
(9) Ps. cv. 24.
(10) Ps. xliv. 10.
(11) Ephes. ii. 22.
(12) Mich. iv. 1.

Queen! but we know all your charity, all your goodness, all your mercy; and our confidence in you is unbounded: through your aid we hope to lead a holy life, and obtain a part of that kingdom of God, where we shall rejoice for all eternity for having said to you here below with tender piety, worthy of your sweet majesty,

QUEEN OF ALL SAINTS, PRAY FOR US!
Regina sanctorum omnium, ora pro nobis!

MEDITATION LIV.

REGINA SINE LABE ORIGINALI CONCEPTA, ORA PRO NOBIS!

IT is to the exalted piety of our bishops, who requested it of the Holy See in these latter times, that we are indebted for the sweet consolation of being able to salute Mary as the *Queen conceived without original sin.* The Scripture calls God, in an absolute manner, "the King,"[1] to express the excellence of his supreme majesty; was it not proper to honour the sovereignty of her who "is above all except God,"[2] by calling her *Queen* in the proper sense of the word? And after the invocation which implores her as *Queen of all saints*, what other could have been better placed than that which honours at the same time her royal greatness and the singular privilege of her exemption from original sin? a privilege which would alone distinguish her from all the elect, even if, in so many other respects, she were not above them; a privilege which the voice of the tradition of the Church always proclaimed, the faithful echo of the teaching of the apostles.

In his discourse to the proconsul Œgeas, St. Andrew himself gives Mary the title of "immaculate:" he compares her to "the earth of which the first man was formed, which had not yet received the malediction of the Lord, the consequence and chas-

(1) Ps. xiv., cxliv. (2) St. Bernard, Serm. 6, c. 6.

tisement of the original sin." Origen, who comes near to the age of the apostles, styles her "formed in grace," "nor," says he, "was she infected by the breath of the venomous serpent."[2] St. Amphilochius calls her without stain and without sin;[3] St. Epiphanius, "more beautiful even than the cherubim and seraphim, and all the angelic host: the immaculate sheep who brought forth the Lamb Christ:"[4] St. Ephrem, "O unspotted, undefiled, and perfectly pure and chaste Virgin Mary, . . . every way immaculate;"[5] St. Cyril, "preserved from the original stain."[6] What need is there to quote other channels of the transmission of the primitive belief in this respect? Who does not know that Saints Jerom,[7] Augustin,[8] Fulgentius,[9] Ildefonsus,[10] John Damascen,[11] Peter Damian,[12] Anselm,[13] Bonaventure,[14] and even St. Thomas,[15] guarantee alike on this point the uninterrupted tradition of the Church; that with the testimonies of holy doctors are united the monuments of the churches of the East, and those of the Latin churches, the words of the sacred liturgy, the usages of dioceses, the customs of religious orders; in fine, the acts of the Holy See, crowned by the dogmatical decree of Pius IX.,[16] which, accomplishing the desires of pastors and faithful, declared this belief a truth of faith, to the great applause and unexampled joy of the Catholic world?

And how much is this act of doctrinal infallibility in felicitous harmony with the inferences from our other holy points of belief! If the personal union of the human and divine natures in Jesus Christ rendered it absolutely necessary that the Man-God should be conceived in the state of grace, could the divine

(1) Acts of St. Andrew (Dissertation on the Immaculate Conception by Card. Lambruschini).
(2) Hom. vi. in Luc.
(3) IV. Disc. in S. Deip.
(4) De laudib. Virg.
(5) Orat. de S. Dei Gen.
(6) In Evang. Joan., ii., vi., c. 15.
(7) In Ps. lxxvii.
(8) De Nat. et Grat., c. 36.
(9) Serm. de laud. M.
(10) Disput. de V. M.
(11) Orat. de Nat. B. V. M.
(12) Or. 11 de Nat. M.
(13) De Concept. Virg., c. 18.
(14) Serm. 11 de B. V.
(15) In lib. 1 Sent. disp. 44, q. 1 ad 3.
(16) 8 Dec. 1854.

maternity, "which comes as near as possible to that union,"[1] have been compatible with the conception of Mary in the state of sin? . . . Could she, whom God had announced from the beginning of the world, as being threatened in vain by the bite of the infernal serpent, and even destined "to crush his head,"[2] have begun by being wounded herself by his dart, and being "subject to his power?"[3] Could she, who was to be in a manner the repairer of the fall of Eve, and the true "Mother of the living,"[4] have been inferior to Eve, who was created in a state of grace? She, in fine, who alone in the world was to be styled "Full of grace,"[5] who was to live for nine months even a corporal life with the Word incarnate, could she have been struck with the Divine displeasure, in the first moment of her existence, rendered odious to the Lord, and a "child of wrath?"[6]

O no, a thousand times over; it could not be so, O Virgin so tenderly cherished both by God and men! He comprehends and feels this well, who has the idea which Christianity gives us of sin and grace, and the infinite sanctity of God: such a one loves to proclaim in the face of heaven and earth, with the supernatural certainty of faith, that not for a single moment had the Son of God to turn away his eyes from her who was to be his Mother, as from an object insupportable to his sight. But such a man attaches also to the avoidance of all sin an unparalleled importance; he esteems, like Mary, above everything else, the happiness of being in favour with God: he "watches and prays"[7] assiduously to preserve the treasure of the Divine friendship; he labours by good works to draw every day the sacred bonds of it closer and closer, and to increase daily its inestimable fruits.

O Mary! O blessed Queen! O Queen by pre-eminence! *O Queen conceived without original sin!* behold the last ejaculation of our heart towards you; behold the last ray of glory, which, upon earth, we may add to your crown! What a happiness for us to be

(1) St. Dionys. of Carthage, liv. ii. De Laud. V.
(2) Gen. iii. 15.
(3) Col. i. 13.
(4) Gen. iii. 15.
(5) St. Luke i. 28.
(6) Ephes. ii. 3.
(7) St. Mark xiii. 33.

able to say to you that "the Lord possessed *you, by his grace*, in the beginning of his ways;"[1] and that you are immaculate, "all fair, *and that there is* not a spot in you!"[2] O be ever the Queen of our hearts, O you who had the distinguished honour to be exempted from the law, which was "*not made for you, but for all others;*"[3] and that your rule over our hearts may be pleasing to you, obtain that they may attach themselves more and more to serving God with purity and fervour. It is to obtain this grace that we repeat to you, with all the humility, confidence, and love in our power,—

QUEEN CONCEIVED WITHOUT ORIGINAL SIN, PRAY FOR US!
Regina sine labe originali concepta, ora pro nobis!

MEDITATION LV.

AGNUS DEI, QUI TOLLIS PECCATA MUNDI, PARCE NOBIS, DOMINE!

THE Church terminates the invocations in honour of the most holy Virgin, in accents full of emotion, addressed to her adorable Son, under the emblem of the "Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world."[4] And first, she presents him to our consideration as the Judge, whose clemency we must implore; "the Lamb . . . standing in the midst of the throne;[5] he who is to judge us by his cross, the sign of the Son of Man,"[6] the sign "of death or of life"[7] to us all, according as our works shall have been opposed or conformable to the holy maxims which flow from it.

Alas! this character of Judge we do not consider with sufficient faith in the adorable Person of our divine Jesus. We love to contemplate him under the image of a good Shepherd,[8] under

(1) Prov. viii. 22.
(2) Cant. v. 2; iv. 7.
(3) Esther xv. 13.
(4) St. John i. 29.
(5) Apoc. v. 6.
(6) St. Matt. xxiv. 30.
(7) St. Luke ii. 34.
(8) St. Luke xv.

the image of a good Father,[1] under the image of a mother full of tenderness;[2] and doubtless we ought so to do, since he seems to delight in depicting to us under these traits, in the holy Gospel, the unspeakable riches of his goodness and love for us. But we forget that if we do not worthily correspond with so much goodness and love, we shall only be the more culpable "for having known the truth, and having in a manner stifled it *in our heart;*"[3] we forget that the greater is this goodness, the more ardent, generous, and prodigious in its effects is this love, the more are we bound to be sensible of it; we forget, in fine, that if we carry our ingratitude towards this "Lamb of God,"[4] so sweet, and amiable, and tender towards us, so far as to violate the absolute rights which he has over our will, our affections, and the use of all our faculties, we expose ourselves to find in him in the next world only "the *terrible* Lion of the tribe of Juda,"[5] before whom the reprobate will one day "say to the mountains and rocks,—Fall upon us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb."[6]

But is not this Lamb goodness itself, meekness itself, "charity itself?"[7] O yes, Jesus has well proved all this to us: he has done things for us which men do not, even when they cordially love one another. But the more he is good, the more also is he just, all his perfections being alike infinite; and if we renounce the sweet reign of his incomparable love, must not the reign of his justice have its turn, after the life which is given us to choose either the one or the other? But, do we *sincerely* "judge ourselves?"[8] Is it not true that we show but little gratitude? What do I say? Is it not true that we are ungrateful, that we treat Jesus as if we owed him nothing, and sometimes almost as if we had some interest in provoking his justice against us? Is it not true that he whom it strikes has but too well deserved his eternal misery? . . . . Yes, if of the ineffable mystery of the

(1) St. Luke xv.
(2) St. Matt. xxiii. 37.
(3) Rom. i. 18, 21.
(4) St. John i. 29.
(5) Apoc. v. 5.
(6) Apoc. vi. 16.
(7) 1 St. John iv. 8.
(8) 1 Cor. xi. 31.

Eucharist it may be said with truth, when we consider the mystery of the cross,—Love explains love! so when we see on the one side, the prodigies of the goodness and tender love of Jesus for men, and, on the other, the indifference, the abominable and obstinate ingratitude of so many sinners, we may well exclaim,—the Incarnation, the Redemption, the Eucharist, and Heaven are a sufficient explanation of hell! . . . O is not hell itself, in the adorable views of Providence, as it were, a last resource to force him, in some manner, to secure his salvation, whom more noble motives would leave insensible? . . . .

But we, who perhaps have so often deserved this hell, we, who perhaps have too long disowned the rights of the Lamb of God over us, who have abused his benefits and affronted his love, O! let us beg pardon for our unworthy conduct; let us enter into profound sentiments of grief, at the thought of wrongs so grievous, with which we have to reproach ourselves towards him; let us prostrate ourselves at his feet with a "heart *truly* contrite, *truly* humble,"[1] as we say to him more in deep feeling than in words,—

"O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world,"[2] spare us, O Lord! Spare us, O sovereign Master of all things, O sovereign "Judge of the living and of the dead,"[3] spare us! It is true that in thy sight we are nothing but ungrateful creatures, who have despised thy unspeakable love, and madly disdained thy rewards, as if heaven were not worth the trouble of some few exertions; and who have braved thy justice, as if the threat of thy chastisements was not serious. O how criminal are we! . . . But do not treat us as we deserve; treat us according to thy infinite clemency, which we all implore, striking our breasts, with the penitent publican,[4] and saying to thee from the bottom of our heart, "Spare, O Lord, spare thy people!"[5] that, by the intercession of thy divine Mother, thou mayest "be exalted

(1) Ps. l. 9. (2) St. John i. 29.
(3) Acts x. 42. (4) St. Luke xviii. 13.
(5) Joel ii. 17.

sparing *us;*"[1] and that the word of the prophet Joel may be verified in us—"The Lord hath been zealous for his land, and hath spared his people."[2]

LAMB OF GOD, WHO TAKEST AWAY THE SINS OF THE WORLD, SPARE US, O LORD!

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, parce nobis, Domine!

MEDITATION LVI.

AGNUS DEI, QUI TOLLIS PECCATA MUNDI, EXAUDI NOS, DOMINE.

AFTER beseeching the Lamb of God to spare us, we persevere, and entreat him to vouchsafe graciously to hear the groans which we have sent up to the throne of his clemency. The first cry of our heart was an accent of lively repentance, an accent of profound and bitter sorrow. The second is an accent of humble prayer, which implores infinite goodness, in order to obtain a great, and very great favour, on which depends our lot for eternity,—"Graciously hear us, O Lord!"

The Church here directs us to repeat *O Lord* "to the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world,"[3] in order to convince us more and more of the greatness and infinite majesty of this incomparable benefactor, whom we have had the misfortune to offend, and to make us more and more contrite for our offences. But it is also to remind us that he, to whom we address our suppliant cries, is the absolute Master of all things; "that he has the keys of death and hell;"[4] and that consequently our prayer cannot be too humble or too fervent. O then, may these words proceed from the inmost feelings of our hearts, "Graciously hear

(1) Isa. xxx. 18. (2) Joel ii. 18.
(3) St. John i. 29. (4) Apoc. i. 18.

us, O Lord!" For, alas! we know too well that we have made ourselves guilty, but we know not, and we never shall know, with certainty, that God has forgiven us.

On this account, we ought every day to bewail our sins, to endeavour every day to make satisfaction for them before the Lord, and every day, with fresh ardour, to beseech that God, who is goodness itself, to "remember not our iniquities."[1] David, though well assured of his pardon by those words of the prophet Nathan, "The Lord hath taken away thy sin,"[2] had his crime nevertheless always before him;[3] he entreated the Most High to "cleanse him yet more from it;"[4] and in the night he even "watered his couch with his tears."[5] O what ought we to do, we who, alas! have too often "committed iniquity,"[6] and who have not received from the infallible mouth of a prophet the assurance of our reconciliation with God! .... St. Paul, that great apostle, who deserved to be caught up to the third heaven, did he not also say, "I am not conscious to myself of anything, yet am I not hereby justified?"[7] What! does then that admirable servant and minister of God, who had received so many proofs of his benevolence and love, that illustrious saint, who had achieved innumerable labours for the glory of his adorable Master,—the incomparable St. Paul,—in a word, not dare to think himself justified! and shall we, whose lives have been so far from resembling his, we, who after very grievous and multiplied sins have perhaps done hardly anything to expiate them, shall we live as if we were sure of going straight to heaven? .... O rather in what continual sentiments of profound humility and lively contrition ought we to keep ourselves! "Sacrifice," says Bossuet, "is the more acceptable, as the victim is more noble: it cannot then be doubted that it is an action incomparably more excellent to humble our minds before God, than to mortify our bodies for his sake."[8] But to the humiliation of our mind before

(1) Ps. lxxviii. 8.
(2) 2 Kings xii. 13.
(3) Ps. l. 5.
(4) Ps. l. 4.
(5) Ps. vi. 7.
(6) Ps. cv. 6.
(7) 1 Cor. iv. 4.
(8) IIme. Paneg. de S. François de Paule, p. 203.

the Lord, let us join sorrow, continually renewed, for having violated holy Baptism, and "trodden under foot, *in some sense*, the adorable blood"[1] of that divine Lamb, who became a victim for us. "The more we shall deplore the misery into which we have fallen, the more shall we draw near to the good which we have lost. Let us, then, never cease to shed tears so fruitful; let our sorrow, substituted for torments of eternal duration, in some measure imitate its intolerable perpetuity, by extending at least to our last agony."[2]

O Lamb of God, adorable victim, "slain *in figure* from the beginning of the world,"[3] in all the sacrifices of the patriarchs, and later on, in all those which were offered under the law of Moses; slain in reality, in a bloody manner, on Calvary, on the very spot where Adam had formerly been interred,[4] that "as in Adam all die, all might in Thee receive life;"[5] slain since, and continually in a mystical manner, but in a manner no less real, upon our altars, where thou art always living, "as it were slain;"[6] to pray and beseech thee to be merciful to us, is this not responding to the desire of thy heart, which carried to excess[7] its self-devotedness for us? No, no; it did not enter into the designs of thy justice to treat us without mercy, since it is thou who grantest us the grace to repent, and implore thee with all our heart, and the desire to labour without ceasing, to expiate the past by penance. O it is then thy will, that uniting with the august pontiffs and other ministers of the Church, who cease not to pray for all her members to the most Holy Virgin, who never ceases to intercede herself for us all,—we should say to thee, with feelings of humiliation and profound sorrow, but also

(1) Heb. x. 29.

(2) Bossuet, 2me. Paneg. de S. François de Paule, p. 196.

(3) Apoc. xiii. 8.

(4) St. Ambrose, Origen, Tertullian, SS. Athanasius, Epiphanius, Cyril of Jerusalem. See the Biblioth. choisie des Pères, par Guillon, t. ix. p. 147.

(5) Origen, in Matt.

(6) Apoc. v. 6.

(7) Ephes. ii. 4.

with full confidence that "so having prayed, *we* shall be heard;[1] hear us, O God, our Saviour:"[2]

LAMB OF GOD, WHO TAKEST AWAY THE SINS OF THE WORLD, GRACIOUSLY HEAR US, O LORD!

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, exaudi nos Domine!

MEDITATION LVII.

AGNUS DEI, QUI TOLLIS PECCATA MUNDI, MISERERE NOBIS!

HERE we still persevere, in order to obtain the pardon of our sins, and entreat the Lamb of God *to have mercy on us.* This time we do not add the title of *Lord;* we desire, if we may so say, that the divine Jesus should forget his greatness and majesty, so much offended by us, to remember only his infinite mercy, and that adorable compassion which he showed by condescending to be "tempted in all things like as we are."[3] Thus we make a final appeal to the adorable heart of our divine Saviour, which cannot remain inefficacious. Is it not, in fact, as if we should say to him, O thou, who "hast delivered thyself for us,"[4] who art the propitiation for the sins "of the whole world,"[5] O doubtless we no way deserve to be heard, when we beg thy pardon for those which we have had the misfortune to commit; but we appeal to that unspeakable compassion which thou feelest for us; save us, save us, O Lamb of God; save us at least through pure compassion and mercy? . . . .

If David formerly said to God, with a sublime confidence founded on a sublime sense of infinite mercy, "Thou wilt pardon my sin, for it is great;"[6] if, before the Incarnation and Redemption—mysteries in which that mercy was so conspicuous—he had

(1) Ecclus. xxxiii. 4. (2) Ps. lxiv. 6.
(3) Heb. iv. 15. (4) Ephes. v. 2.
(5) 1 St. John ii. 2. (6) Ps. xxiv. 11.

an idea so exalted, so ample, of that abyss of goodness, which loves to descend upon the penitent sinner like a dew of grace and pardon, what idea, what sentiments ought we ourselves to have, when we address ourselves to this infinite goodness, manifested to us in the human nature of a God become a victim for us? . . . . O do we wish to understand what power every appeal to his adorable compassion has upon the tender and devoted heart of this Lamb of God?—let us open the Gospel. Who is the man who ever said to him, during his mortal life, "Have mercy on me!" without obtaining the grant of his prayer? Two poor blind men follow him, crying out, "Son of David, have mercy on us!" He touches their eyes, and their eyes are opened to the light.[1] A woman of Canaan, whose daughter is miserably tormented by the devil, cries out in her turn, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"—"Be it done to thee as thou wilt," Jesus answers, "and her daughter was cured from that hour."[2] "Lord, have pity on my son, for he is a lunatic, and suffereth much,"[3] says an afflicted father to him; Jesus delivers him at the same moment. Near Jericho, a blind man named Bartimeus also implores his compassion—"Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"[4] Jesus commands, and the blind man recovers his sight. Ten lepers, standing afar off, "lift up their voice, saying, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"[5] and they obtain their cure. This admirable sympathy for all human miseries—this tender compassion, which made St. Peter say of him that he "went about doing good,"[6] can it be that Jesus now glorified has ceased to feel? O see rather how he delights to prove it to us, more and more, by the perpetual prodigy of the adorable Eucharist! Does he not, in this mystery, place at our disposal his blood and all his merits? Does he not offer himself every day, and every hour, as the victim of propitiation for our sins, and of impetration for all graces of which we may stand in need? Does he not

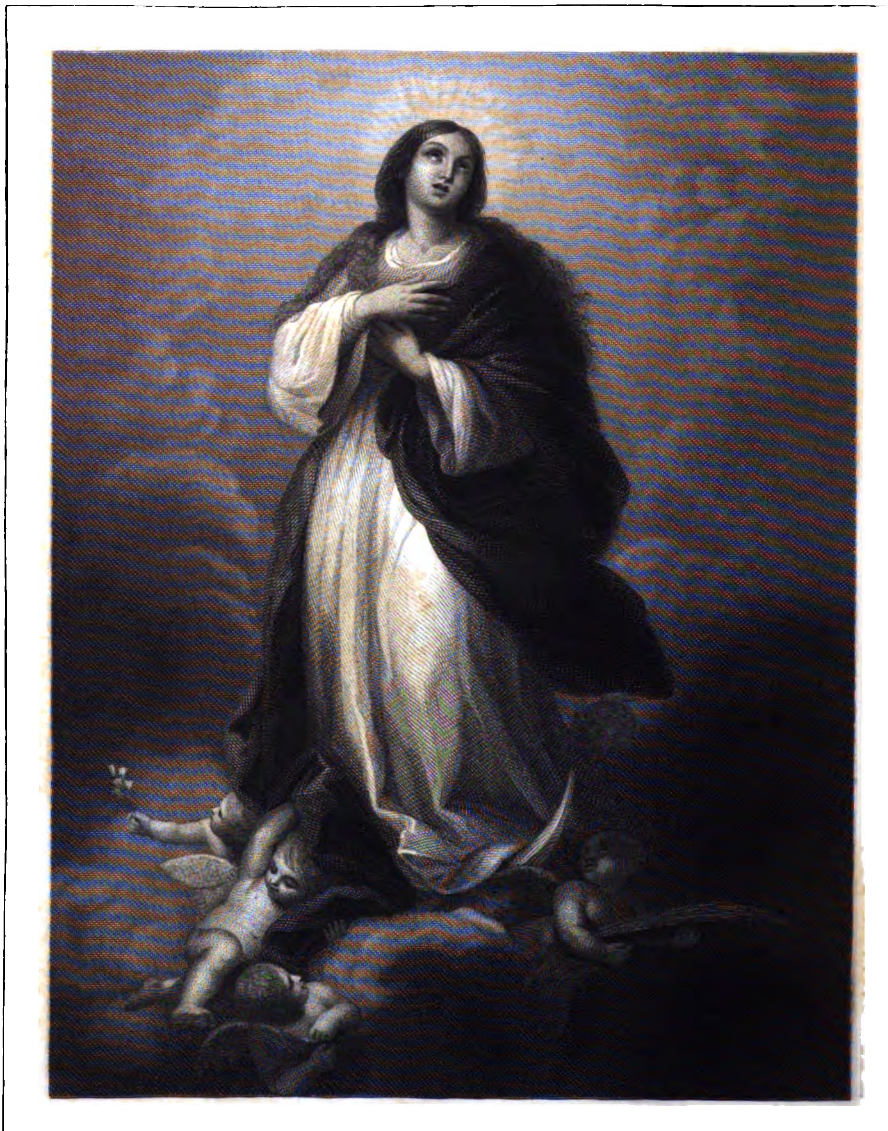
(1) St. Matt. ix. 27.
(2) St. Matt. xv. 22, 28.
(3) St. Matt. xvii. 14.
(4) St. Mark x. 47.
(5) St. Luke xvii. 13.
(6) Acts x. 38.

incessantly make a sacrifice of his glory for us, which is in a manner annihilated under the lowly species; a sacrifice of his liberty, subject in some measure to the will of his ministers; a sacrifice of the exercise of his justice, so often provoked by the attacks of sinners, and suspended by the wonderful long-suffering of his mercy? For now almost two thousand years has this Lamb of God thus prolonged without interruption his incomparable self-devotedness to our salvation, adding incessantly miracle to miracle; and can we doubt the activity, the tenderness, the generosity of his compassion for hearts moved by repentance and desirous of his love? . . . . Let us then say to him, giving ourselves up to the sweetest confidence, "O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world,"[1] have mercy on us, who are so much to be pitied, and so unworthy to be regarded by thy goodness! O if thou didst consider only thy infinite justice, thou must strike those ungrateful creatures, who have rendered thee evil for good, coldness and insult for love. But we implore that pity, that inexhaustible mercy with which thy heart overflows towards penitent sinners; we implore that adorable blood, in which are extinguished all the flames of the "wrath of God,"[2] and by which is effected "the remission of sins;"[3] and that our voice may find yet more securely access to thee, we unite it with that of the most holy Virgin, our good and sweet Mother, and by her sacred lips we offer to thee that pious aspiration which the Church places upon those of her children, to whatever condition they belong—

LAMB OF GOD, WHO TAKEST AWAY THE SINS OF THE WORLD, HAVE MERCY ON US!

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis!

(1) St. John i. 29. (2) Apoc. xv. 7.
(3) Col. i. 14.



Murillo

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

To Our Blessed Lady.

POEMS

ON

THE LITANY OF LORETTO.

BY

IDA, COUNTESS HAHN-HAHN.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

BY

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PROVOST OF NORTHAMPTON.

WITH AN ADDITIONAL POEM BY THE TRANSLATOR.

Dedication by the Authoress.

TO HER MAJESTY

MARY, QUEEN OF SAXONY,

IN TOKEN OF

THE PROFOUND HOMAGE

OF

A GRATEFUL HEART.

PREFACE OF THE AUTHORESS.

WHAT a strange little book do I here send forth into the world! Into the world—uneasy, bewildered, harassed as it is by the alarms of war, the strifes of parties, and the speeches in assemblies. I hope that the world will not too closely criticise it, for it is not written for the world. It is neither witty, nor fine, polished, nor interesting, nor beautiful, nor charming—it simply speaks the language of faith: and because it is such, it must e'en come forth, to attain its object in peace in the midst of this noisy world. What is its object? To convey from me a greeting to the heart of every Catholic.

IDA HAHN-HAHN.

MENTZ, ST. ANDREW'S DAY,
November 30, 1850.

POEMS

ON

THE LITANY OF LORETTO.

KYRIE ELEISON!

LORD, HAVE MERCY ON US!

The old earth reels, the aged walls give way—
No place for flight; death there, here ruin see!
Star falls on star! blood-signs dread forms display!
Have mercy, Lord! We groan and cry to Thee.

Have mercy, Father! to thy suppliant yield;
Pity the work of thy creative hands!
See, weak and trembling, without arms or shield,
The sinner at thy seat of judgment stands.

Have mercy, Son! Who thus can cry to thee,
And not be healed, O Saviour, by thy might;
Invited by thy blood-stained arms to be
Brought to thy cross—from night and death to light.

Have mercy, Holy Spirit! Love! if thou
Lovest e'en men who love not, from above,
If thou dost conquer, is not in thee now
Vanquished the love of right by right of love?

Have mercy! Yet how dare we come to pray
  Before the Triune Judge of awful state,
Where angel-princes trembling homage pay.
  What if, instead of life, death seals our fate!

O there is yet in golden blaze a throne,
  In heaven's perennial spring and azure clear,
Lilies and roses round it woven, strewn—
  O haste and kneel before OUR LADY DEAR.

SANCTA MARIA, SANCTA DEI GENITRIX, ORA PRO NOBIS!

HOLY MARY, HOLY MOTHER OF GOD, PRAY FOR US!

WHEN in deep pain and sadness
  The soul sinks down oppressed,
The thought of thee brings gladness,
  Mother of Jesus blest!
Thou who that favour sharedst,
  Granted to thee alone,
Mother, who God's Son bearedst,
  How glorious is thy throne!

From thy rich crown is sparkling
  The diamond stone of love,
Rewarding lone hearts darkling,
  With brightness from above.
And each may at his pleasure
  This brilliant jewel take,
Call it his own rich treasure,
  With it his own crown make.

Love's plenitude possessing,
 In God's repose serene,
Her Son for ever blessing,
 Sits Mary, glorious Queen!
To men, through her, the portal
 He grants of heavenly rest,
Who placed himself, when mortal,
 An infant at her breast.

What name shall e'er disclose it,
 That love so glowing? Say,
Only the God who knows it;
 Man's spirit sinks away.
Man ever will in loving
 Behold himself alone;
But here he sees love proving
 The path with thorns o'erstrewn.

Man strongly covets pleasures,
 And joys in this world found,
And sees that love's best treasures
 Sorrows and woes surround.
Man only in joy's beaming
 Finds love, and owns its name;
But here, thorn-crowned, blood-streaming,
 Love all but sinks to shame.

As He, our dark fate knowing,
 Went on his pilgrim way,
How longed his pure heart glowing
 To bleed for us each day.
As He, his dear life spending,
 Endured each dreadful pain,
Our peace and bliss intending,
 Nor bled for us in vain.

As He, our woes enduring,
  Sad and forsaken lay,
For all our pains securing
  The beam of glory's ray.
As He, in life's last heaving,
  Lone on the cross-tree hung,
Scorn, anguish, wounds receiving,
  With loving heart and tongue.

All this our life ennobles,
  Incites us, poor and weak,
To him to look in troubles,
  And from him blessings seek.
Dismay no more appals us,
  New strength beams from above,
Our God has saved and called us,
  Redeeming us through love.

No more the soul can languish,
  But gladly pain will bear,
For he has welcomed anguish,
  As costly treasures rare.
Her course on earth is clearest,
  She knows both way and end,
O thou his Mother dearest,
  Where can thy praises end?

SANCTA VIRGO VIRGINUM, ORA PRO NOBIS!

HOLY VIRGIN OF VIRGINS, PRAY FOR US!

As the ancient fables say,
Birds of paradise so bright,
Fluttering on their pinions light,
Soar on high, nor fear to fail,
But through heaven's blue ether sail,
Through the night and through the day;—

As they never light on tree,
Nor on earth's dust ever tread,
But their life on high is led,
When above both moon and sun,
Their exalted home is won,
Where heaven's golden gates they see;—

As earth's food they never share,
Heavy, dull, beheld with scorn,
But alone the dew of morn,
Out of flowery cups they drink,
And again retire and sink
In the bright blue sea of air;—

As their glittering feathers glow,
Richer than the rose or star,
All enchanting from afar,
Like the brilliant rainbow light,
Stretched with blending colours bright,
Beams upon the earth below;—

So dost thou, O virgin's crown!
Thou, enthroned in heavenly shrine,
Fairer than the lilies shine;
Thou for whom no portraits trace
Grandeur blended so with grace,
As thou from thy throne look'st down.

How thine heart, replete with love,
Glows a furnace of pure flame,
Ever burning on, the same,
Never quenched by earthly flood,
Like the ruby's tint of blood,
Rich with lustre from above.

Pure as that famed sapphire stone
Where the wondrous power is lent,
That its colours soon are spent,
First grow pale, then disappear,
If a hand impure comes near,
Leaving shame and grief alone.

From all earthly clear and free,
Though on earth is still its place,
Flows through thee the stream of grace,
Which the love-seal stamps secure
On the soul's bright mirror pure,
Which we heaven-reflected see.

All before thee, pure and bright,
Spotless ermine, drifted snow,
Pearls and flowers alike must bow;
None of all may ever dare
With thy white crown to compare,
Lost and dazzled in its light.

Happy who himself hath given
All to thee, from earth secure,
Heavenly is his heart and pure;
All the gifts this poor world gives,
Shuns with caution while he lives,
Leads on earth the life of heaven.

And when ranked with angels bright,
Will he gaze enraptured round,
And in verdant pastures bound;
There rich peace for ever know,
Which thy favour here below
Could but hold before his sight.

MATER CHRISTI, ORA PRO NOBIS!

MOTHER OF CHRIST, PRAY FOR US!

Thou, who thyself a free offering didst give,
That by thy Son's offering sinners might live,
Thou, who all sorrow and pain didst endure,
Thou, of all sin ever guiltless and pure,—

Open to mortals thy love-beaming heart,
Teach them the lesson of love's sacred smart,
Let them learn words of pure holocaust's fire,
Which in the soul of the sinner expire;

Write them in stars on heaven's canopy bright,
Trace on this dark world their symbols in light,
Make them like heaven's dew, or rain fall below,
Causing rich blessings in men's hearts to grow.

Let them appear plain and lovely to men,
Peace will on earth descend then—only then;
If from that holocaust men turn away,
Earthly things totter to wreck and decay.

Sad that they will not that sacrifice know,
Daring afar from its altar they go,
Each hopes to live by his own base desire,
Proudly contemptuous of love's sacred fire.

Even so daringly love do they chase,
That no more remains in time for it a place;
For all that such mortals presume love to name
Has no divine purity, beauty, or flame.

They feel no longing to hold it secure,
Like it to grow, and to have it endure;
From all else to part, and nought earthly to own,
Sunk and absorbed in love's ocean alone.

Nought, neither sorrow nor joy to hold dear,
Heedless alike of the smile and the tear,
Holding as vain both the thorn and the rose,
Breezes of spring, winter's howling and snows.

Vain as the dust are the riches of life,
When not Divine is the aim of our strife,
If the heart burns not, and heaves not the breast,
Only in God now and ever to rest—

Only in Him does the heart enjoy peace,
Longings for earth must be silent and cease,
So from all phantom delusions and fright,
Freely it turns to the source of true light.

Free from all self, and no longer a slave,
Freedom it won by the offering it gave,
In silence of soul, it had offered in pain
A victim in God's love, to find it again.

Only for *all* is all freely given,
God would his own life, descending from heaven,
Lovingly offer our ransom to be—
Innocence suffering, the guilty to free.

Never, O never then can we succeed,
Smoothly and freely to heaven to proceed,
Never can hope for repose while we live,
If not our sacrifice gladly we give.

If the strong flame of pure love on the cross
Does not reduce all earth's beauties to dross,
If not entranced by the charms of God's love,
Love for men's souls dawns alike from above.

If while beneath its poor fragile veil here,
Faith is not firmly secure and sincere,
Man to his Saviour may kindle the flame,
But his offering the world will soon quench and defame.

God would himself even like us become,
Changing for earth's woes his heavenly home;
Thus, since our God gave himself all for men.
Man now to God may himself raise again.

Again by desire and repentance secure,
That Babylon shall not with Sion endure,
That the chalice our cravings of thirst that can still,
No wine of earth's gaiety ever shall fill.

Thou who the greatest of victims didst bear,
His moanings on Golgotha's mountain didst hear,
Thou when the sharp sword had pierced to thy heart,
More than in death didst endure from the smart.

Let not in self man be hardened to stone,
On him let rays from thy pure heart be thrown,
Make in thy glowing and heavenly fire
Our sins and our weakness dissolve and expire.

So may all willing and joyful prepare
For the loved cross every suffering to bear,
Onward to Calvary's summit to go,
The Easter of bliss everlasting to know.

MATER DIVINÆ GRATIÆ, ORA PRO NOBIS!

MOTHER OF DIVINE GRACE, PRAY FOR US!

GRACE! thou sweetest word of love,
  Kinder name no mortal knows;
Grace! how light all sorrows prove,
  Grace! all pain is calm repose;
Grace! as zephyr's gentle spell
  Flutters through the dewy bower,
When the waves of ocean swell,
  Soon we feel its soothing power.

Grace! and from the eyelid red,
  Whence flowed tears but yesterday,
Heavy grief at once is fled
  With the last tear wiped away.

Grace! and hands so often wrung,
  On the beating bosom pressed,
Alms around have open flung,
  Raised from glad and grateful breast.

Grace! and quick the mark of dust,
  And the stain of every sin,
Vanish from the forehead must,
  When heaven's favour glows within.
And the soul, which void of life,
  Sin-benumbed and helpless lay,
With new sense and vigour rife,
  Shall the power of grace display.

Now again she spreads her wings,
  Far more joyous than before,
And her mirror to her brings
  God's own image more and more.
Fresh her power and pure her will,
  Heavenward now her course she bends,
And to grace, grace fuller still,
  And perfection's goal she tends.

Where pure grace's fountain springs,
  Where like ocean grace rolls on,
And where grace its radiance flings,
  Earth is waste, its charms are gone.
Nought it knows of that pure flood,
  Which the fount of love contains,
But for sin toils e'en to blood,
  Reaping grief for all its pains.

Mother of all grace and love,
  To thee did thy God confide
That pure victim from above,
  By whom heaven's gate opens wide.

Dazzled, and with eyes cast down,
  Standest thou before his face,
And in bright and glorious crown,
  Full of rich celestial grace.

Deepest woe thy soul oppressed,
  Bliss supreme succeeds thy grief,
Heaviest hours that knew no rest,
  Now have brought thee sweet relief.
What the widest heart of man
  Feeds on, from the stores of love,
Beam in joy and sorrow can
  On us from thy throne above.

Thy sweet smile is bliss most pure,
  Worlds are far below its worth,
And thy soothing words can cure
  Saddest plaints escaped from earth.
Not for thee, for thou art blest!
  Not for Him—whom triumphs grace!
Thou by Him beloved, caressed,
  Near him high enthroned hast place.

That in vain may not have flowed
  Thy Son's blood in sacrifice,
Nor in vain have been bestowed
  Grace which in that offering lies,
Thou dost, full of mercy, call
  All that seek thy pitying eye,
In thine arms embracing all
  Who in secret contrite sigh.

Thou, within thy mantle fold,
  Coverest him, who filled with shame,
Cannot stand before thee bold,
  Groaning 'neath a sinner's name.

Mother of sweet grace!—what word
Can express that full love? Thine!
For the breast thy God preferred
Must be truly styled divine.

MATER PURISSIMA, ORA PRO NOBIS!

MOTHER MOST PURE, PRAY FOR US!

Dust to be, as before,
Must be again our fate;
It gathers at our door,
It lies before our gate.
It hangs in every home,
The whitest robes upon,
It tops the sea's light foam,
It soils the snow-white swan.

The purest flower that blows
With dust is sprinkled too;
E'en where the sunbeam glows,
The dust obscures its view.
The taper we may trim,
But dust will cloud its light;
The dust makes dull and dim,
The heart once gay and bright.

The eye, when veiled in dust,
Enjoys not beauty's ray,
The soul beneath that rust
Gives truth no festal day.

Love will in dust contend
 To death, in search of good,
For all that dust can send
 Is no celestial food.

If in dark thoughts and fears
 The cup is spent and drained,
Then will her bitter tears
 Lament that nought is gained.
And if faith lies in dust,
 Deceived by fancied worth,
Instead of God, it must
 Adore false gods of earth.

Through idols dead, and cares,
 E'en life itself falls dead,
Held captive in the snares
 By needy earth's dust spread.
And sunk down in the slough,
 On softest ground to lie,
Stammers in triumph now,
 Dust-fallen, drunken *I!*

O Mary! heaven's bright Queen,
 O lift thy veil from me!
Let me in silvery sheen
 Thy pure white lilies see;
And from the starry throne
 That grace may come, O pray!
Which from our brows alone
 Can wash all stains away.

MATER AMABILIS, ORA PRO NOBIS!

MOTHER MOST AMIABLE, PRAY FOR US!

Mother thou of beauteous love,
Holy hope, and sweetest grace,
Who can now in darkness rove,
When thy love-star lights his trace?
When to thee his heart is raised,
And to thine is purely given,
When through thee he lives amazed
Here below, as if in heaven.

Ah! to heaven aspire men all,
Love, and hope they may not fail,
Wait to hear the gladdening call
Sound from mountain top to vale.
But the wondrous flowers of love
Vain 's the hope abroad to find;
They who truly seek them, rove
Not beyond their inmost mind.

For the sounds that near us ring,
Do but echo words of mortals—
To heaven's temple cannot bring,
Lead not to its holy portals;
But allure to desert land,
Mock us there with friendly breath,
Till poor *self* alone must stand,
In the dreary waste of death.

He who seeks true love to know
Sternly self must sacrifice,
Self on funeral pile must throw,
And the smart with tears baptize;

Glad in flames this world must lay,
  Till of all is left no trace,
So that nought obstructs the way
  To the happy reign of grace.

When in fire earth disappears,
  Ashes there alone remain,
When the soul is filled with fears,
  Lest no sun should beam again,
See there glows the daylight red,
  See new life's triumphant morn,
And from smouldering ashes spread,
  See the youthful phœnix born.

And in heaven does freely range
  Love, without restraint, or end,
Free from longing, free from change,
  Never back will turn or tend!
Love is ever deep and still,
  Unexhausted, like the sea;
Love our poor soul never will
  Leave to drear vacuity.

Mother thou of beauteous love,
  Wert from guilt and ruin free!
Mother thou of beauteous love,
  No self-dying was for thee.
Heavenward thou wert ever turned,
  As we see the sunflower bend,
Shaded, or in sunshine burned,
  Blooming on from first to end.

Every warm aspiring heart,
  Which, though faint with love's deep thirst,
Has not learned beneath its smart
  Self to offer freely first—

All these poor forsake thou not,
To the altar draw them still,
And like incense may their lot
Be to burn to God's high will.

MATER CREATORIS, ORA PRO NOBIS!

MOTHER OF OUR CREATOR, PRAY FOR US!

As if the world's fabric ably they had placed,
Or with God's own creative power could vie,
As if with clamours, childish wish, and haste,
Like boys exulting, when their craft they try,
They the world's basis had aspired to lay,
And those profound inquiries, *Who?* and *How?*
Had but regarded as school tasks and play—
Such bold beginning who shall dare avow?

Ne'er were men seen before their powers to strain,
Which the outside alone and surface know,
Destined from depth far distant to remain,
And name of substance on weak self bestow;
Never were efforts seen thus paltry, poor,
From the great Spirit to revolt and part,
Who, full of grace, a life of faith secure,
A life of love unfolds to every heart.

Never distorted so were souls of men,
Not *mine* from *thine*, nor right from wrong to know;
For in their self love's deep and gloomy den,
Eternal truth's bright flame can never glow.

Never moved pleasure in so bold attire,
  Never so shameless sense's base pursuits,
Never for things profane so wild desire,
  Never were men so like mere knowing brutes.

What other tribes, and zones untutored know,
  What ancient times with wicked minds have wrought,
On such the praise of pure and high bestow—
  Thou seest it now, and here before thee brought.
To their false gods and altars they would bring,
  To the black stone, to the poor *fetiche* too,
Victims they bring and thanks, and everything
  To praise and honour, with obedience do.

With their dull sense then, firmly they believed
  That true light somewhere shone with glorious beam,
And sought thence grace and favour to receive,
  Yet now, averse to grace and faith men seem!
Why is grace given, why was redemption wrought?
  Redemption for us our self-love achieves;
From old dull errors it has freedom bought:
  Narrow the soul that still in sin believes.

They smile that holy love should kneel and pray,
  They look with scorn upon a pious man,
They pity him who does not blush to say
  And freely own that still believe he can.
In the abyss so deeply are they sunk,
  That e'en the light from heaven they miss no more,
Reeling in sin's intoxication drunk,
  All sense of right and conscience long closed o'er.

Why then lament, and wherefore plaintive mourn?
  Whoever found that this world shall not fall?
Before thee, Lord! lies clear the utmost bourn
  Of days appointed for thy creatures all.

That time will yet arrive—it is at hand,
  When the apostates quivering, still and dumb,
In faith profound and love at length shall stand,
  Before thy mysteries shall adoring come.

This world in mystery forth at first was brought,
  And still its onward move does mystery hide.
For all by men contrived, invented, thought—
  Whose wisdom the concluding word supplied?
Who hath e'er fathomed vast creation's deep?
  We can indeed destroy and separate,
And with hard toil some knowledge snatch and keep;
  'Tis thine, O God! to save and to create.

'Tis thine, the Lord of countless spirits bright,
  Whose throne the rays of wisdom so surround,
That of their thousand colours and full light,
  Our dull eye can but dream, to earth still bound,
And cannot find that deep, but sunlit ground
  Where springs the stream where Love's name first is heard,
Whence did thy will this world of beauty found,
  When thou, O Lord! didst loving speak the WORD!

There floats a veil we may not draw aside,
  An ocean over which no ship can sail,
A sea of flame, at which we fear and hide,
  The mouth is mute, but faith's eye cannot fail;
Faith offers incense, tapers, jewels, flowers,
  The best things of creation, loving, there
Before the heart of hearts her offerings pours
  Of God's pure Mother, on her altar fair.

MATER SALVATORIS, ORA PRO NOBIS!

MOTHER OF OUR SAVIOUR, PRAY FOR US!

A SKY with many a glittering star
  O'erspread with lovely azure blue,
Whose bright aphelion from afar
  Distils on earth the roseate dew,
Instead of narrow dungeon dread,
  Where death-like chilness damps the brow,
Where air and light no blessings shed—
  Such, O Redemption! such art thou.

A stream, which shady banks enclose,
  Where beauteous flowers abundant grow,
Which bathes the palm-branch, as it flows
  Where sunbeams bright, not burning, glow.
To fairy lands the stream will haste,
  With plenty, beauty, rich and free,
Forth from a poor and barren waste—
  This, O Redemption! pictures thee.

A sea o'er which, with sails full set,
  The ship with golden treasures flies,
And which with coral fills the net,
  And pearls, which charm admiring eyes—
Whence splendour beams, and freely flows
  To desert isles, made lovely now,
Which on them kingly gifts bestows—
  This, O Redemption! this art thou.

And more thou art! so much the soul
  Is nobler than earth's dust and clay,
That our Redeemer saved it whole,
  Nor gave it to the fiend a prey;

That He, for hearts which far had erred,
  For their unstableness and pride,
For all their guilt at nought demurred,
  But freely shed his blood's rich tide.

So much art thou, that angels may,
  Who heaven's mysterious secrets know,
Perchance the word befitting say,
  Not granted to our lips below,
Which deeply reverenced is on earth,
  And treasured in the heart's deep cell,
Faith only apprehends its worth,
  The mouth its glories may not tell.

And thou, O dearest, sweetest found!
  Mother of Him who bought us free!
What melody, what dulcet sound
  Shall waft our heart's full praise to thee?
Our life he took, for lost man's sake,
  From thee, when come to dwell on earth,
A mother he would deign to take,
  His love chose thee to give him birth.

And so gushed forth for man below
  The spring of life, and grace, and light,
Which ever with mysterious flow
  Quenches the guilt of ancient night.
And more, a brilliant Sun of love,
  Lighting to heaven's gate bright and clear,
And joy to all like bliss above,
  In thy pure heart, O Mother dear!

Sacred is now each mother's smart,
  Her love and all her fearful grief,
As thou didst feel in thy pure heart,
  And when time brings it no relief.

Sacred the tears her cheeks that burn,
Her anxious bliss, when these she dries.
O Mother, on my mother turn
Thy comforting and pitying eyes.

VIRGO POTENS, ORA PRO NOBIS!

VIRGIN MOST POWERFUL, PRAY FOR US!

O DISMAL night! heaven clouded o'er,
Dark, and without one cheering star,
From distance heard the tempest's roar,
The lightning quivering from afar.
Like those for battle-field prepared,
Behold all nature trembling wait,
And from the sky's dark frown declared,
Discern the dreaded signs of fate.

Mariners furl up the sail,
Row for port with eager flight;
Sea birds seek, with scream and wail,
Covert creek on pinions light;
All within safe bolted stay,
Sit the sheltering hearth before,
Save the wanderer doomed to stray
Distant from some friendly door.

But what magic power has ended
Suddenly the tempest's might?
Has some ban from heaven descended?
Which subdues the furious night?

See the cloud spreads thin and thinner,
  Opens, brightens, and gives way,
As with hellish thoughts the sinner
  Flies before the face of day.

And the tempest's voice is heard
  Dying off in murmurs low,
And the sea, so lately stirred,
  Smooth and tranquil shines below.
Flickering flash, like serpent fleet,
  Gilds the sea with timid gleam;
Hearts with fear no longer beat—
  'Twas, as ever, but a dream.

Whence that power, that could control
  The sea's swift surge, the ocean's rage?
Lo! from the East a soft light stole,
  Calm, but potent to assuage;
Bid woe from languid earth begone,
  And man from sinking griefs awake,
Beauteous and soft, as glides the swan
  Majestic o'er the sombre lake.

Raging elements that strove
  Have the placid moon obeyed,
Waves below and storms above
  Are in peaceful slumber laid;
But with such a scene beguiled,
  When in rest and peace are we,
Virgin potent, sweet and mild,
  Turns our soul its thoughts on thee.

Many a tempest's fury through
  Glidest thou—a placid moon,
Which with kind protection true
  In peace enthroned, peace brings us soon.

And when perils threatening rose,
  Gathering fierce thy children round,
Thou didst smite their banded foes,
  Strong and mighty, to the ground.

When a heart itself has seen
  Close with evil fetters bound,
And thy will to free has been,
  Soon that heart has freedom found.
When in dark, oppressive hour,
  Cries for help to thee have rung,
Ever ready stood thy power,
  Quick the fount of help has sprung.

Never so have ruled around
  Pride and malice, fraud and lies
Never held so strongly bound
  As now the world, their prostrate prize.
Daring falsehood, void of fear,
  Dooming men to endless pain;
And yet victory so near,
  Which shall ever thine remain.

Trample on these hostile powers,
  Radiant in thy glorious might;
Suns shall then illume our bowers,
  Where late scowled the darkest night.
Queen of earth and heaven art thou,
  Save! for perils quickly swell—
Lead to tents eternal now
  Ransomed, joyous Israel.

VIRGO FIDELIS, ORA PRO NOBIS!

VIRGIN MOST FAITHFUL, PRAY FOR US!

On the Image of the Mother of God at Neuhaus.*

ON the clear blue Baltic's strand,
Sturdy, gnarled oaks around,
Near the sea, in meadow land,
Is a good old mansion found.
With its massive pointed roof,
Built as was our fathers' way,
With its old watch-tower, time-proof,
Guarded well for many a day.

In that tower the chapel placed,
As it was in ancient days,
When it kept the threshold graced
By devotion's prayers and praise;
So that faith's sweet gift and power
Mildly on life's path might shine,
Still her image, to this hour
Stands who bore the Child divine.

It stands! Three hundred years have brought
The altar long so hallowed there,
And the sanctuary round it, nought
Of faith but vacant dreams in air—
Of faith devoid of power and love,
Divided, given to earth a prey,
Not relishing the things above,
Cold, empty, wasting to decay.

* My brother's property, in Holstein.

And such dreams prophetic proved,
  Sorrowful completion left;
Truth from silent halls removed,
  Now of all her charms bereft.
Lonely now that altar lies,
  Dust and dirt defile its face,
For true faith alone can prize,
  Bless, and guard the holy place.

But, as if unmoved by all,
  She, in heaven enthroned and crowned,
Keeps her lofty pedestal,
  Standing on the crescent found.
Still, as if faith's latest spark
  She unhurt had seen decay,
Here, 'mid error's ruins dark
  Still unmoved she holds her sway.

Impious image-breaking hands
  Sunk before thee overawed:
Virgin faithful! thy commands
  Still can chase the dream of fraud.
May'st thou yet three hundred years
  Never leave that desert place;
But let faith, to calm our fears,
  Thither yet its steps retrace.

Anxious is the search and long,
  Through the world so vast and wide,
Men in eager crowds now throng
  'Neath *One's* sheltering power to hide.
This, at least, O let them find!
  That she safe to heaven can steer.
Bring thou sight to those so blind,
  In that time-worn mansion dear.

O thou faithful Virgin! pray,
  Full of mercy, full of grace,
In thy brilliant morning ray,
  Making former guilt give place.
Nod, and they at once are thine!
  Smile,—their errors melt away!
Husband, wife, to thee incline,
  Children loving own thy sway.

Ever faithful Virgin! think,
  Think upon thy Son, thy own:
Lead from dire destruction's brink,
  Little ones to Jesus' throne.
Hold them in thy loving arms,
  Be their faithful rock and stay,
Calm in mercy their alarms,
  Turn not little ones away.

SPECULUM JUSTITIÆ, ORA PRO NOBIS!

MIRROR OF JUSTICE, PRAY FOR US!

Holy! through all heaven it sounds,
  Down to earth aloud is heard,
Through earth's tumult still rebounds,
  Word of promise, hopeful word.
Holy! every soul on high
  Looks to distant realms of light,
Spite of guilt, with hopeful cry,
  Justice causing no affright.

Holy! God in heaven above,
  In the fulness of his rest,
Angels praise him thus with love,
  Holy! there for ever blest.
And all they, replete with joy,
  Shine before him, glorious band,
Fed on charms which cannot cloy,
  Holy in his bliss they stand.

Holy! and to earth displayed,
  Is heaven's ladder hung in air.
Holy! soul shalt thou be made;
  See how grace invites thee there—
See the seven-starred crown of worth
  Waits to wreath thy brows above,
Which through all the ways of earth
  Holds thee in a net of love.

This at every step of thine
  Loving cheers thee on thy way,
If from right thy feet decline,
  Leads them back, gone far astray.
This in thy dark sinful night,
  When thou e'en thyself dost hate,
When of self thou feel'st affright,
  As eye of God doth contemplate.

This its deep purpureal rays
  Blue and gold around thee throws—
Richer than Orion's blaze,
  For thee love-inflamed it glows.
For that gold and purple flame,
  And that soft, ethereal blue
From the blood of Love—the same
  Shed to ransom thee—it drew.

Take it with its varied hues:
  Blue is humble, gold is pure,
But before all, purple choose,
  Pain and love dwell there secure.
O accept it! in its glow
  Dies thy poor dust's feeble gray.
From the seven-starred crown below
  Drops the dew of brightest day.

Let thy soul find life again,
  From her prison cell set free,
Be thou washed from every stain
  Which thy sins have fixed on thee.
Mount heaven's ladder, void of fear,
  To the starry regions bright;
It shall raise thee near, more near
  To the source of quenchless light.

Holy Mirror! bright and kind,
  All thy glorious charms display,
May the weak soul light wings find,
  Who so soon is led astray.
Willing thou on us look'st down,
  Pleased to proffer our request,
For the brilliant seven-starred crown
  Rested once upon thy breast.

SEDES SAPIENTIÆ, ORA PRO NOBIS!

SEAT OF WISDOM, PRAY FOR US!

O SENSELESS word! which dost thy thousands blind,
And with fell poison drenchest thousands more,
O serpent sound! destruction to the mind;
How happy he who clears that rock-bound shore!
He, not by false-named knowledge led astray,
Whom sophistry no false impression gives,
To no dark depths of science falls a prey,
In faith's pure light, secure, undoubting lives.

What knowest thou then, so boastingly to say
As 'twere the soul's grand festal robe, "I know?"
Thou know'st what others, in a bygone day
Thought, learnt, and did, and did bestow
As price of greatness some, and some of fame.
Thou knowest much from learned book and scroll,
Thy own research and study much can claim,
But say, what of all this avails thy soul?

Thou knowest! but what canst thou do? I ask;
Canst thou subdue thyself, if need there be,
To chain down tyrant *I*? attempt the task
When, drunk with arrogance, he swells in thee.
Canst thou with coward heart the world o'ercome?
Not that external world beneath thy feet—
O no! its gods thou know'st are false and dumb—
But that world in thy heart with flattery sweet.

And canst thou offerings bring, and canst thou love?
Not sacrifices such as pride desires,
But offer self to Him who rules above—
Small offering, which humility inspires,

Which to the eye of God alone displayed,
  Has no loud praise of men for its reward,
Which goes in deep disgrace alone arrayed,
  But hidden love dwells there with sweet regard.

All this perchance, with all thy wisdom gained,
  Thou hast some time discovered from afar,
Yet unattracted has thy soul remained
  From this poor shadowy world—a calm, still star,
Which never mortal eye upon its way
  Has followed in its silent, distant light;
And yet it can with all its blissful ray
  Shine down upon our earth with radiance bright.

Well may the spirit rest not in dead sleep,
  She strives, is anxious, wakes up sad and ill,
Poor slave of knowledge, doomed to toil and weep,
  Add to one grain of sand another still,
And yet contentment destined ne'er to find.
  Less soon the cup is filled than it is void,
Two long draughts drain it, leaving nought behind,
  And wisdom's empty boast is soon destroyed.

O no! man's own poor, dark, and turbid spring,
  All human wisdom, and all words of man,
No knowledge to his mind can ever bring,
  Find there a place to rest he never can.
In mighty fulness forth a river pours,
  Which onwards deep and still, proud glittering goes,
And then its banks, thick grown with charming flowers,
  With sweetest perfume gently overflows.

So copious, cool refreshment to bestow,
  Unfailing, in the desert's fiery gleam—
Exhaustless, though through million hands it flow,
  Is revelation's consecrated stream.

There kneel, there joyfully bend down and stop,
  There hast thou living waters fresh and clear;
See the white dove, from her bright plumage drop
  Bright gems which sparkling on its face appear.

O never leave this calm and holy place!
  See what to thee the sacred stream will bring;
Is thy soul sad? here seek the wished-for grace,
  For here the sounds of joy and freedom ring.
Humbly receiving on thy knees, obey
  With willing heart thy Lord's exalted word,
And with pure faith and love with Mary say,
  "Behold in me the handmaid of the Lord!"

CAUSA NOSTRÆ LÆTITIÆ, ORA PRO NOBIS!

CAUSE OF OUR JOY, PRAY FOR US!

Did we but understand,
  Joy might we ever share,
But pain with our own hand
  We for ourselves prepare.
We might spend all our days
  In pleasure and delight,
But for ourselves we raise
  The woes of care's dark night.

We know ourselves secure,
  We know our safe abode,
Yet every morn is sure
  To see us take the road.

We struggle hard, and strive,
Not knowing whither pressed,
Nor can our heart arrive
At peace or lasting rest.

Deep shades, and deeper still,
The wandering eye obscure,
Fatigue and trembling will
The weary soul endure.
We slighted and despised
The sunbeams glorious might,
We stumble now, surprised
By dreary shades of night.

Far from our heavenly home
Have strayed our erring feet,
Still longing, as we roam,
Its thought is doubly sweet.
To him who thoughtless bends
His steps from home astray,
Whose love is that which sends
Him envoys on his way?

The Mother's tender love
Calls back poor wandering men,
Half lost to bliss above,
To turn towards heaven again.
She bids her servants go
And seek on every way
Her loving words they know—
"Lead home poor souls astray."

A bell rings loud and gay—
A salutation sweet
Three times throughout the day,
With *Angelus* will greet.

And on the greenest land
  Which skirts the forest glade,
There does the chapel stand,
  By the old oak-tree's shade.

And there like purest rose,
  Guarded with thorns around,
Mother of sevenfold woes,
  With sword transfixed is found.
And on the mount, where grow
  The purple heath and moss,
Where lonely tempests blow,
  There stands a holy cross.

She dwells within her shrine,
  God's Mother, pure and mild,
Jesus, her Son divine,
  Throned in her arms, sweet child!
There kneels, in every ill,
  With many a glistening tear,
Who seeks, retired and still,
  To pray the chaplet dear.

In old cathedral aisles
  She stands, the type of grace,
On thousand pilgrims smiles,
  Who seek the holy place.
Bright tapers from all parts
  The Virgin's shrine adorn,
With gold and silver hearts,
  Whence she has plucked the thorn.

Her form, where'er he turns,
  The fugitive will find;
He hopes afresh, and learns
  Her love who greets him kind;

He sees her crescent throne,
  Glorious above the sky,
He sees her starry crown
  With radiance bright on high.

She looks through night and day
  With Mother's eye most sweet,
That pilgrims on their way
  No adverse powers may meet.
Did we but understand,
  We must be glad and gay,
Led by her gracious hand,
  To heaven how safe the way!

VAS SPIRITUALE, ORA PRO NOBIS!

SPIRITUAL VESSEL, PRAY FOR US!

THE watchword of this motley world is *See*,
  And in God's holy city 'tis *Believe;*
There does the heart choose death's poor slave to be,
  Here the immortal soul will endless life receive.
For what thou seest is death! In wreaths of flowers,
  In purple mantle, and where sunbeams shine,
In pleasure's charms, in beauty's sweetest bowers,
  Still is it death—aye, death alone is thine.

For what is transient, to death has passed;
  And if it e'en outlives a thousand years,
The day will come—for all it comes at last—
  Where, with weak step, the transient appears.

Then look not after beauteous form and face
  Too much, nor yet too long; they but deceive,
Thine eye grows weary in the eager chase,
  In endless charms alone can rest receive.

And while it pines in grief, descend cold showers
  With icy flakes upon thy burning heart,
And as the cataract's dark torrent pours,
  It sinks beneath the stream, with keenest smart,
Which from thy lowest depth of soul doth flow,
  And deals these hostile threats against the world,
That nothing transient gives thee peace of soul,
  But all thou seest and lov'st to death is hurled.

Yet are we not given up to death a prize—
  He could not the great Conqueror withstand;
In place of death's dark fate, faith life supplies,
  To cheer us on in this our pilgrim land.
The palace falls, man withers like the flower,
  A race, a heart, a fortune, like the grass;
O turn thee then to faith's all-hallowed power!
  There shalt thou free from death's hard bondage pass.

Within the holy place a vessel gleams,
  Rich as the rainbow or the ruby found,
Or diamond, sparkling bright with sunny beams,
  As lilies white, with roses twining round;
Pellucid as a dew-drop in the spring,
  Untouched, and solid as a precious stone,
No flowery garland could such beauty bring,
  And firm as gold and steel, unblemished and alone.

This sacred vessel roses veiled around,
  And golden clouds with mystery replete;
Near it were powers of heaven adoring found,
  And angel hosts knelt humbly at its feet.

The sun there darted down its purest ray,
  The earth was silent, the glad stars shone bright,
On silvery wings a dove flew on its way,
  Through this, the Lord's own hallowed night.

On the high altar now that vessel stood,
  With living water to the brim now filled,
Which, with unearthly flow, pure, pearly flood,
  In sevenfold streamlets to its brink has rilled.
This fruitful made by God's almighty breath,
  And all enlightened by his radiant face,
Can cleanse each one who bathes his soul beneath,
  Each one that thirsts can fill with copious grace.

And of this sevenfold stream the sacred flow
  Will ever render fruitful man's poor land,
There in perpetual sun the seed shall grow,
  No choking weeds before its course shall stand.
Refreshment never fails to pastures sear,
  These waters' wondrous power shall ne'er decay,
They overflow dark gulfs, abundant, clear,
  And swell the latest sap within the spray.

In God's own heart the sevenfold current flows,
  And forms his love's unbounded ocean deep,
And lo! the torrents of thy earthly woes,
  Like blind conceits, dissolved within it sleep.
Haste then, and bathe in this clear fount of grace,
  O wash thy soul from dust in this pure tide,
Supported then by faith in firm, sure pace,
  Shalt thou with *Him* in Paradise abide.

ROSA MYSTICA, ORA PRO NOBIS!

MYSTICAL ROSE, PRAY FOR US!

"What seek ye?"—"Roses!"

Roses from youth will be stolen by years,
The rose from their cheeks and their locks disappears;
The roses of joy will soon fade and decay,
But sooner by grief will be scattered away.
The roses of love, the most charming of all,
Must bloom on the grave, and bloom but to fall.
Seek not then roses, whose leaves are soon shed,
Ere you suspect, on your breast they lie dead;
For they are dust, they belong to the earth,
They expand but to die—'tis all they are worth.
Seek ye for roses? Seek *One*—the most bright,
Splendidly shining in heaven's pure light,
Sparkling with rays of the stars and the sun,
Clearer than streams which through paradise run.
Rich with a perfume which wastes not, nor dies,
Glowing in flames unrevealed to man's eyes;
Fairer than fairest which this world adorns,
Nor like earthly roses, surrounded with thorns.
Look well around you, that *Her* you may find,
Open your eyes, ye that err and are blind;
Look up from earth to high heaven so clear,
Why not look eager to glory so near?
Diamond-encircled, with tapers around,
Bright on the altar, the image is found;
Yet the lustre of jewels and lights will depart,
Sunken and quenched by the blaze of the heart,
Like the faint glimmer of lamps that expire,
Compared with the brilliant and dazzling fire

Which from the cup of the Rose fervid streams,
Loving and blessing wherever it gleams,--
Mystical Rose, all hail to thy beams!

Love, in thy purple and gold flaming rays,
Grace, out of purest and crystalline vase,
Fly like the turtle on peace-bearing wing,
Down to our earth, heaven's blessing to bring.
Spread thy rich mantle of azure and gold,
Which heaven's starry floor served to unfold,
Woven within the rich cup of the rose,
Which thou on earth dost from heaven disclose,
Which every sinner expands to infold,
And on sweet hope will encourage to hold;
If but its hem sinners firmly embrace
With faith, they are never deserted by grace,
But strongly attracted and raised up within,
Till they, delivered from deep stains of sin,
There, where the water of life freely flows,
Wash and are clean, after penitent throes.
All hail to thee, sweet mystical Rose!

But on the innermost leaf of the heart,
Whiter and brighter than words can impart,
A rich pearl reposes, most holy, serene,
Once only such has the universe seen!
When is unveiled the rich fulness of grace,
When renewed life shall man's sorrows efface,
When joy on earth and in heaven shall have place,
Then does that pearl distil dew of its own,
Deep on the heart's rosy leaf fully blown,
Pain and love hallowing for self alone.

O when with anguish for sin the heart quakes,
When with the sorrow of love the heart breaks,
Then does the pure pearl, so precious, pay all
Due for our sins, whether grievous or small.

But the sweet Rose is with heaven allied,
For the pearl in its calyx will ever abide;
For dew from the throne of the sun flowing free,
In grace fall again on the suppliant we see.
Mystical Rose, all hail unto thee!

TURRIS DAVIDICA, ORA PRO NOBIS!

TOWER OF DAVID, PRAY FOR US!

Royal daughters, come ye nigh,
David's royal daughter see;
Though no purple meets the eye,
Though in want you see her lie,
Still the Great King's bride is she.

Deeply humble, bending low,
In obedience firm and still,
With love's ardour see her glow,
Too hard no oblation know,
Ready at her Lord's blest will.

Whence exalted see her stand,
Pride and premium of her race,
Blessing man with liberal hand
With all gifts at her command,
Crowned in heaven's most glorious place.

Are you royal daughters true?
Is rich purple your attire?
Let the world then see in you
That from kings your birth you drew—
Be as pearls which all admire.

Prostrate all your jewelled pride,
  Kneel to her with humble mien,
That your souls be not denied,
Faith and love, like diamonds tried,
  Such as shine on heaven's great Queen.

Be ye queens of soul and mind,
  Low before the altar bow,
What your talents learn and find,
What bright wreaths your brows may bind,
  Bring to her with willing vow.

Haste, that you, though rich you be,
  In your souls still poor and void,
May yourselves not captured see,
By self, as your deity,
  And, like Lucifer, destroyed.

Are ye crowned with beauty fair?
  O fall down in dust each day,
For decay to mock will dare
What perpetual we declare,
  Seizing it, an easy prey.

O then queens of spirit be,
  Take those cherished hearts, your own,
Bid all selfish thoughts to flee,
And though hot tears follow free,
  Bear them up to heaven's high throne.

TURRIS EBURNEA, ORA PRO NOBIS!

TOWER OF IVORY, PRAY FOR US!

FIRM, and high, and pure,
Thou shalt rest *secure!*
When the thunders roll,
When the lightnings play,
Let them angry growl,
They will pass away.
After storms and rain
Comes the morning dew,
Fresher flowers again
Blossom to our view.

If by grief oppressed,
All thy courage sinks,
If thy heaving breast
Bitter wormwood drinks;
Then thy beating heart
Still unconquerèd take,
Fast in keenest smart
Hold it, lest it break.
Firm, and high, and pure,
Brave shalt thou endure.

When with splendid crown,
When with winning smile,
Earthly bliss looks down,
Hoping to beguile,
If thou, thus allured,
Anxious, faltering prove,
Rest not unsecured,
Upwards quickly move.

Firm, and high, and pure,
Joyful be and sure.

Fear thou not for tears,
  Neither dread to fight,
Men's vain thoughts and fears
  Never bring thee light.
Where the soul finds strength,
  There is truly rest,
Peace hast thou at length,
  Not before possessed.
Firm, and high, and pure,
Calm wilt thou endure.

Ask not if to bleed,
  Fated be thy breast,
Or if warmth succeed
  Cold, forbidding rest:
Keep *One* in thy heart,
  One before thy sight,
Where the keenest smart
  Is both bliss and light.
Firm, and high, and pure,
Happy rest secure.

To thine image bright,
  Virgin tender, strong,
Gentleness and might,
  Blended both belong.
Power to love in sadness,
  Power in patience too,
Power in heavenly gladness,
  Still our guilt to view.
Firm, and high, and pure,
  Sole dost thou endure.

DOMUS AUREA, ORA PRO NOBIS!

HOUSE OF GOLD, PRAY FOR US!

Temples, regal festive days,
All in turn must pass away;
Where the Fellah's ploughshares raze,
Thebes' proud remains decay,
In Osiris' holy place
Bats now dwell in hideous bands—
Where with lotus flower to grace
Isis stood, a stable stands.

Balbec's glorious temple round,
Libanus' dark mountain nigh,
Deep the notes of mourning sound,
And its pillars shattered lie.
Up and down great Helios' fane,
In the Sun's bright worship's sheen,
Riding swift o'er desert plain,
Druses with war-dance are seen.

Firm, as if no earthly power
Ever should its columns break,
Did the Dorian, in his hour,
Pæstum's ancient temple make.
But no guardian angel flew
To protect that graceless stone;
Now, where Pæstum's roses grew,
Bog and thorns are found alone.

Beauteous isle! the sea's bright pearl,
Cruel fate awaited thee,
Rhodes! thou didst see unfurl
Noble knights their banner free.

For the faith, as lions brave,
  Fought thy knights with valiant arm;
But the pearl they could not save
  From the Turks' victorious swarm.

Wondrous ruins, massive blocks,
  Still stand bold on Albion's plain,
Fragments huge of mighty rocks,
  Pointing heavenward still remain;
But the genius long hath flown
  Which gave life and spirit here,
Druids now men name alone
  Not unlearned to appear.

In Granada's vale dost thou
  Still in fairy form repose,
And thy lion's fount e'en now
  Thou Alhambra dost disclose!
There the nightingales yet sing,
  There the roses blossom too,
And the splashing fountains spring—
  But where dwells the Moorish crew?

All before Time's scythe must fall!
  Lovely now—now waste and drear;
Temple, palace, festive hall,
  None can stand secure from fear.
Still with mute, but mighty power,
  Preaches forth each ruin gray—
" Here has all its destined hour,
  " Seek what falls not to decay."

Does not he, who hears that cry,
  Quickly rise, without delay?
And the precipice too nigh
  Does he not all restless stray,

Till to death fatigued and pressed,
  Full of discontent he cries,
" How shall my soul sweetly rest
  " In that tent for which she sighs?"

But dost thou not stand on high,
  House of gold, all glorious made,
Bright with sunbeams in the sky,
  Sight to every eye displayed?
Ready art thou to receive,
  With love's sheltering screen and shield,
Him, no more to sigh nor grieve,
  Peace to him nought else can yield.

Thou wilt readily impart
  Peace to him of clouded brow;
To all weak and sad of heart,
  Welcome shelter offerest thou.
Keepest deadly foes aloof,
  House of gold! thou guardest sure,
Under thy protecting roof,
  We poor pilgrims rest secure.

FŒDERIS ARCA, ORA PRO NOBIS!

ARK OF THE COVENANT, PRAY FOR US!

HEAR ye the roar of the high mounting tide?
  See ye the deluge rush forth on its way?
See ye the waters swell angry and wide?
  Hear ye the dash of the wild ocean's spray?

Feel ye not earth reel beneath you and quake,
As from thunder of cannon and clashing of arms?
Mountains burst open and firmest rocks shake,
Earth whelmed in night and terrific alarms.

But across the billow,
Sails a silvery bark,
And its shining pillow
Lights the waters dark.
See it joyous go,
Through the raging sea,
As if all below
Peace alone could be.

Who can the temple preserve from the wave,
Which the rude storms of the ocean surround?
Whom shall the altars now shelter and save?
Ruin has all overtaken and bound.
How the proud palaces vanish from earth!
O the drear wilderness circles them round!
O the wild desert, where feasting and mirth
Once held their jubilees, silent is found!

But amid the roar
The silvery ship moves on,
Softly floating o'er,
Like the placid swan.
Storms but fan the while
Round the keel in sport,
And the waves but smile
As she nears the port.

O the proud palaces quickly are sunk!
And the rich temples shake to their fall;
But the wild waves, as with victory drunk,
Roll on more daring, and dash over all.

Castle and cottage alike must give way,
What can the giant-like fury defy?
Corpses already are tossed on the spray,
Nought it avails to the mountains to fly.

Calmly still advancing,
Comes the silvery boat,
On the billows dancing,
See her proudly float.
Skilled her path to find
O'er the boisterous deep,
East, in every wind,
See her compass keep.

Those who in vain hope of safety had fled
Look with dismay on the flood rolling wide,
Owning the power of that arm which they dread.
Where is their wickedness now, and their pride?
Vainly now wrung and uplifted are found
Hands which were never before joined in prayer,
And as the waters encircle them round,
Tremble at judgment, all pale with despair.

But towards the shore
Where they hopeless stand,
'Mid the ocean's roar,
To the cheerless strand,
Wrecks and woes between,
Peacefully will float,
On her track serene,
Still the silvery boat.

Fall on your knees, grace and mercy now crave,
Pray her to take you on board her to peace;
Leave the lone strand, and dash bold in the wave,
Hasten, O quickly! the waters increase.

Cast yourselves fearlessly off from the beach,
  Bravely swim on, through the dark rolling sea,
Else will you never this bright vessel reach,
  Whelmed in deep anguish and woe doomed to be.

See how yet more light
  Floats the silvery bark,
Roses, lilies bright
  Twine around that ark.
Wreathed with these, her sail
  High and free unfurled,
Stretched an ample veil,
  Safe infolds the world.

Here is found mercy, but justice is *there*—
  There is found death, but life given *here;*
Here is a blessing, *there* wrath and despair—
  Can you yet linger, and fools thus appear?
See ye the rainbow of peace bright arise
  Over the vessel—a token of grace;
See ye the dove flutter down from the skies,
  Through the dark clouds, bidding storms to give place.

Wondrous signs we see
  On the silvery bark,
Glad in faith we flee—
  Save us in that ark.
Alleluia sing,
  Shouts of joy we raise,
On the harp's loud string,
  Ark, we tune thy praise!

Erst the faithful few
  Thou didst bear and guide,
Safe the waters through,
  To the mountain's side.

Now must thou thy own,
Virgin mild and sweet,
Gather round thy throne,
Thee in heaven to greet

JANUA CŒLI, ORA PRO NOBIS!

GATE OF HEAVEN, PRAY FOR US!

Dark is the day, and starless the night,
Every where falls the weak vanquished by might,
If thou, O Lord! withdrawest thy right.

Earth has nought left but dire hate and affray,
Shadows beyond, and perpetual decay,
If, Lord, thy love is once taken away.

Nought on the lips but incessant complaint,
Nought in the mind but demand and constraint,
If on our days, Lord, thy light shines but faint.

Nought in our lives can with rest our souls fill,
Nought at our death but a dread causing still,
If, Lord, we are not consoled by thy will.

Such is the fate which on man sin will bind,
These are the fetters about him entwined,
Till thou, Lord, pleasest that thee he shall find.

Were we bowed down on the dust of the plain,
Were we all mute on the rack to remain,
Without thee, O Lord! none could victory gain.

Whether we live or we die, without thee,
Dust and decay must our heritage be;
From such corruption, O Lord! set us free.

Great is the world, and its doings below,
Yet true repose it can never bestow—
Only in thee, Lord, true peace can we know.

Send us the sunbeams of heaven's pure light,
Thus shall our souls be directed aright,
Fearless and free from the darkness of night.

Think of the torrents of tears we have shed,
Think of the hearts which in fountains have bled,
Let peace from both springing round us be spread.

"Must then thy sorrows and storms never end?
Must thy heart ever in combats contend?
Ever 'mid billows without anchor bend?

"Hast thou then never been favoured by grace?
Canst thou then never aspire to that place
Where the bright legions of heaven we trace?

"Canst thou not then look with ardour above,
There where the angels and saints, like the dove,
Hover around heaven's gate, filled with love?"

Bright Gate of heaven! to us wilt thou close?
Where heaven's light in strong streams overflows,
Open to us, give us joy and repose.

Did not, through thee, our Redeemer appear—
He whom worlds worship for ever with fear—
This world from sin's deep defilement to clear.

To grace then devoted art thou, and pursued
By its favours so lovingly ever renewed,
Like manna that fell for the Israelites' food.

Virgin most blessed! do thou then send
Sunbeams of grace, and thy bounty expend,
So to their light may our hearts ever tend.

Rising, like waves by the moon lifted high,
Holy desire and heaven's grace may supply
Peace to them—peace which descends from the sky.

STELLA MATUTINA, ORA PRO NOBIS!

MORNING STAR, PRAY FOR US!

Darkness, mourning, pain, and fear
Overwhelmed the prostrate world,
Dark was life, and still more drear
Was fell death upon it hurled.
Heaven poor man's most earnest prayer
With no answer would requite;
For what oracles declare
Is but false delusive light.

Clouded every soul around,
Mist hangs thick o'er every deed;
Where is guardian spirit found?
In what temple rest in need?
To adorn that gloomy gray,
Outward ornaments they keep;
Firmly should they quench and slay
That demand which will not sleep.

Beauty must her glowing rays
  Cast upon the sultry dream,
But her rich ideal blaze
  Cannot match the truth's bright gleam.
Every false god bore the mark
  Of deep pensiveness and care;
Temples proved no sheltering ark,
  Dreaded fate pursued them there.

And mankind, all deeply sunk
  In this wide and shoreless sea,
Staggered, as with sin made drunk,
  Loudly clamouring to be free;
Met, where'er they grasped around,
  Shadows for their panting heart,
Greatest souls had nothing found
  Save deep pain and grievous smart.

Darkness, mourning, pain, and fear,
  Overwhelm the prostrate world,
There, like spring-tide, tempests drear
  Darkly on their bosoms hurled.
Soft and rosy clouds arise
  In the orient realms afar,
And in light and purple skies
  Mounts on high the Morning Star.

Morning Star! from gates of light
  Forth thou beamest on thy way,
Mounting as Aurora bright,
  Heralding the orb of day,
Thou with fond regard wilt bless
  Us thy children, near and far,
Comfort on our hearts impress,
  O beloved Morning Star!

Morning Star! O Star of grace!
 Dry up all those bitter tears,
Which our grief for sin will trace
 In our soul's dark night of fears.
Every eye obscured with grief,
 O permit no pain to mar!
Willing dost thou give relief,
 O beloved Morning Star!

Morning Star! though dark and drear
 Be our nights, at once 'tis day
When thy love and kindness near
 Dawn, and chase the gloom away.
When, as pass the varied hours,
 Thy soft radiance fades afar,
Day's more brilliant light o'erpowers,
 O beloved Morning Star!

Morning Star! we must then pine,
 Deeply sunk in bitterest woe,
That thy light more strong may shine,
 And its rays more deeply throw.
Grant us then that bear we may,
 Night with every grief and scar,
For thy light brings glorious day,
 O beloved Morning Star!

Morning Star! to thy mild face
 Turns poor man's weak, feeble heart,
From our souls all evil chase,
 Free us from sin's venomed dart.
Haste the fainting soul to save,
 Bring him back who strays afar,
Smile at last upon our grave,
 O thou lovely Morning Star!

SALUS INFIRMORUM, ORA PRO NOBIS!

HEALTH OF THE WEAK, PRAY FOR US!

So much sorrow found on earth,
Pains and deep unnumbered woes,
So much grief at home finds birth,
Cries so loud from bitter throes!
Than this wasting, sickening care,
Bitter less the ocean's spray,
Mountains' weight with this compare,
'Tis lighter than the rose-leaf's play.

But of all the pains we bear,
None there is that anguish brings
With that dread sound to compare,
Which within us mournful rings,
As the worm, devouring all,
Greedy in his fell designs,
Makes each life obey his call,
All unsparing undermines,

Gnaws the marrow of the soul,
Body slowly eats away,
Mind will cruelly control,
Fresh youth strikes to sure decay;
Never resting, till his mark
Brands the brow with deadly skill,
Strength turns weak, and beauty dark,
Shrunk before that dread word—*ill.*

Lo! a world of keenest smart
Opens with this fatal word,
Ah! here sickens every heart,
Ghastly spirits here are stirred.

Sick, amid their eager strife,
  Sick, in passion's ardent course,
Sick, deprived of power and life,
  Will-enslaved without resource.

Fever-sick are they, and know
  Now no more the truth of life;
While for truth they ought to glow,
  That to shun is all their strife.
For the husk what risk and pain,
  While the kernel's cast afar!
Restless they through night would gain
  Phantom lights for heaven's bright star.

Fever-sick, for all around
  Sad disquiet, furious haste,
Greeting thee are ever found,
  Everywhere as guests are placed.
Sick, "Alas!" speaks every eye,
  Every lip the same will say;
On the brow oppressive lie
  Rosy wreath and crown of bay.

Every step is dull and slow,
  With no term or object near,
And from eyelids red will flow
  Many a hot and bitter tear.
Even lovely things and fair
  Do but sicken with their sight,
None the risks of combat share,
  No stout warrior stands to fight.

What are pains of body, say,
  If this sorrow men are spared,
What the space of life's brief day
  With eternity compared?

For the body may indeed
  Every want and woe befall,
But at last securely freed,
  Death delivers them from all.

But what brings he to the soul,
  Does she sick and faint still lie?
Health of weak, O make her whole!
  And her prayers present on high.
'Tis thy will our souls to cure,
  Safe recovery thou dost give;
Heal our wounds and sorrows sure,
  With thy smile, O bid us live!

REFUGIUM PECCATORUM, ORA PRO NOBIS!

REFUGE OF SINNERS, PRAY FOR US!

WHAT makes us ever like the galley slave
  Dragging his heavy, galling iron chain,
Whose burning heart unceasingly will crave
  And beat for freedom, but must beat in vain?
Who gazing ever on the rolling sea,
  The bright horizon and the starlit sky,
By all excited, panting to be free,
  Yet doomed a fettered slave to live and die,
When e'en such longing burns his soul within?
            It is the curse of sin.

What is it sinks, sad as a darkening cloud
  Upon a sunny landscape, in the breast,
Which was a temple where devotion bowed,
  But now is suddenly for idols drest?

Which pure and ardent sought for heavenly food,
  And thirsted only for the streams of life,
But now, by sudden fever-fit subdued,
  Drains the foul cup of sorrows and of strife—
Which strove for truth, and now hears falsehood's din?
                    It is the curse of sin.

What is it that to every joy will yield,
  And still unsated press the soul to death?
What checks the will, contracts exertion's field?
  What suffocates the long and deep-drawn breath,
So that when boldly we have mounted high,
  Not heeding scorching sun, or wasting day,
Suddenly seized with coward fear, we cry,
  And giddy turn, as if to swoon away?
What numbs our limbs without and sense within?
                    It is the curse of sin.

O serpent! thou in paradise, pure joy
  To mar, with bland hypocrisy didst toil,
Thou followest all our footsteps to destroy,
  Our souls of every bliss thou wouldst despoil;
On every pleasure wormwood thou dost shed,
  Thou poisonest every wound that man must bear,
Thou hangest on the heart's light pulse like lead,
  Thou cloudest brightest views with falsehood's glare;
Base lies in purest souls through thee begin.
                    This is the curse of sin.

We look with horror, in the vernal mead,
  Upon thy slimy track left nauseous there;
All that was free, enslaved by thy foul deed,
  Thy nets spread over all that once was fair;
And every mind must lie before thee low,
  And every truth has dark before thee proved,

And every power thou well canst overthrow,
  And every love—Alas! who ever loved,
And was not by thy luring snares drawn in?
          This is the curse of sin.

And thou, O woman! wretched before all,
  Thou who at first didst trust the serpent's word,
How deep from Eden was thy fatal fall!
  How sad thy life dragged on, when thou hadst erred!
A lord and master thou hast never found—
  He is thy slave, though he thy lord may seem,
By thy fair form and soft allurements bound;
  Yet wake him not from power's delusive dream,
Seek but with lulling voice his ear to win.
          This is the curse of sin.

For vengeance terrible the slave would take,
  If once his slavery he woke to see;
A tyrant then would storm, and bid thee quake,
  Power he possesses—let him dream he's free.
O woman! what a net of craft and lies
  Entangled does the soul and heart firm hold,
For it is ever, though with other ties,
  The tale of Dalila and Samson told,
The serpent's charm, and serpent's craft within.
          This is the curse of sin.

O wondrous power which pure love wields around!
  O strength of grace! to break like fragile clay,
At thy command, sin's fetters, which had bound
  Mankind, and clogged and straitened his sad way.
A path before us lies, for us to go;
  That we may follow it, there beams a light,
And where the thickest gloom we see below,
  There does the sun shine clear, and stars show bright.
Sin on the world by woman's fault was brought—
          A woman made it nough.

A woman bruised the hoary serpent's head,
  Who had entwined himself around earth's ball;
Now does hell tremble, for its prey is fled,
  And heaven exults with loud hosanna's call.
A woman bears on high a lily pure,
  Humbled before her God, and trusting true
In heaven's high tabernacle, rests secure;
  Which angels with profound devotion view:
And though the serpent's craft a woman rued,
          A woman him subdued.

Before this woman so sublime, so pure,
  As little known on earth as moon or star,
Should every sinner come, confiding, sure—
  None from this Virgin Queen must stand afar.
She shines in glory, without sin conceived,
  And he is sunk in sin's appalling night.
With sorrow waked by her his soul has grieved—
  Crushed and destroyed is now the serpent's might.
Show us thy pitying eyes and placid brow,
          The Sinners' Refuge, thou.

CONSOLATRIX AFFLICTORUM, ORA PRO NOBIS!

COMFORTER OF THE AFFLICTED, PRAY FOR US!

The heart can only meet
  Distress, where'er it wends,
For every joy so fleet
  In pain or death soon ends.

When down the deep it winds,
  And to its own self goes,
It hieroglyphics finds,
  Their meaning never knows.
      O Mary, pray for us!

The eye, of light bereaved,
  The essence cannot see;
By phantom spark deceived,
  Deems that a star to be!
When into self it pried,
  Full sad it has remained,
Deep sunk in sorrow's tide,
  The altar is profaned.
      O Mary, pray for us!

Whate'er the hands may seize,
  They grasp but ashes there,
And though the rose may please,
  Its hidden thorn will tear.
If for support and rest
  A trusty staff they take,
'Twill fail as soon as pressed,
  And into splinters break.
      O Mary, pray for us!

The feet, where'er they tread,
  In painful path shall stray;
To dismal heights they dread,
  Where leads a safer way?
How thorns, and bogs, and stones
  Obstruct the rugged road;
O eyes! weep with our moans,
  Groan, heart, beneath thy load.
      O Mary, pray for us!

And on the mountain bare,
Which we had longed to gain,
Pain only meets us there,
And we have toiled in vain.
We sit down and deplore,
And sorrowing weep for this,
That now and evermore
It can impart no bliss.
O Mary, pray for us!

And when, absorbed in grief,
Our self is all forgot,
When from our eyes relief
In soft shed tears is sought;
And when a calm repose
Is in our breast prepared,
Then grace will heal our throes,
And sweetest peace be shared.
O Mary, pray for us!

Then, fresh as spring-tide shower,
O Virgin sweet! shall flow
Blessings from thy hand's power,
Which calms each grief and woe.
Red roses thou dost rain,
Of rich and sacred blood,
From heaven, on earth's dry plain,
A thornless, glowing flood.
O Mary, pray for us!

Upon the locks they lie,
And banish every woe,
They wipe the streaming eye,
Its tears no longer flow;

With softest bands alone,
Our souls from earth they bear;
They bloom before thy throne,
In us immortal there.
O Mary, pray for us!

AUXILIUM CHRISTIANORUM, ORA PRO NÕBIS!

HELP OF CHRISTIANS, PRAY FOR US!

O THOU! the Christian's aid,
To thee we trembling fly,
Of fiend's dark craft afraid,
Defend us when we cry.
O hear our groans by night,
From thy bright starry throne,
Present our tears in light
Before thy glorious Son.
O Mary, help!

O Queen of souls, most meek!
The Church sighs on and bears,
What mouth can fully speak
The hate and scorn she shares?
They plundered with fierce frown
The purple robe she wore;
They robbed her of her crown,
Her jewels shine no more.
O Mary, help!

Nor finished yet the strife,
So daring, so unjust—
They clamoured for her life,
We trample thee to dust.

No compromise with thee,
  Thy doom in chains to lie,
Enslaved and outlawed be,
  Servant and beggar die.
          O Mary, help!

Late they the masters were,
  But vengeance has its hour,
While boldly they uprear
  New Babel's haughty tower—
Hear ye the hammers fall
  Upon the building loud?
Hear ye confounded all
  Tongues of the motley crowd?
          O Mary, help!

The Queen of souls in grace
  Standing a captive see,
But ready to embrace
  The cross of Calvary.
Prepared with her heart's blood,
  In garb of penance spilt,
To pour a faithful flood,
  And weep for others' guilt.
          O Mary, help!

In all her sorrowing way,
  This proves her sharpest pain,
To see her sheep astray,
  In desert lands remain.
For since the sheep will hear
  The Shepherd's voice no more,
Rebellion must appear,
  Where they obeyed before.
          O Mary, help!

There all presume to bear
  The sceptre's hallowed weight,
All eager press to share
  Pleasures of wealth and state.
One scorns the pious poor,
  Another hates the meek;
None charity endure,
  All to uproot it seek.
        O Mary, help!

Now terror and dismay
  Pervade the affrighted world,
As when the lightnings play,
  And Heaven's wrath is hurled.
Now beat in court and hall
  High hearts, with anguish riven;
Hands unobserved by all
  Are raised in prayer to heaven.
        O Mary, help!

There do they stand and say,
  Whence can our help come down?
In this dark, evil day,
  How heavy sits our crown!
O justly may you quake,
  Abandoned to your lot!
The crown must fall and break
  When God supports it not.
        O Mary, help!

Seek nothing here on earth,
  Nought distant, nor aught nigh;
That gift alone has worth
  Which comes from Calvary.

O hear its words and live!
  Before it contrite kneel,
And to the Virgin give
  Honour, whose prayer can heal.
          O Mary, help!

From fetters she can free,
  From where she dwells on high
Thy wound marks she will see,
  Her love will aid supply.
And sceptre, purple, crown,
  Shall be restored to thee;
A throne shall be thy own,
  In heaven's great kingdom free.
          O Mary, help!

REGINA ANGELORUM, ORA PRO NOBIS!

QUEEN OF ANGELS, PRAY FOR US!

NEAR the Lamb, in glory rest,
Waiting justice, tranquil, blest,
Patriarchs and prophets bright
  Form a gold-encircling crown,
And from suns eternal, light
  Roseate on their heads is thrown.

What for God they bore on earth,
All their conflicts, rich in worth,
How in deed and word they strove
  Ever to declare his name:
All will be repaid by love,
  All secure in endless fame.

Moria saw how Abraham's heart
Mourned from Isaac soon to part;
Jacob wrestled hard and long
  With the great Jehovah's might;—
All form now a blissful throng,
  In heaven's glorious, endless light.

With their views of heavenly worth,
Far exalted above earth,
Which in distant future's fear,
  Of sweet words of promise blest,
See the glad fulfilment clear—
  There the prophet's peaceful rest.

Oft with potent words of fire,
They before the Lord's dread ire,
'Gainst the impious arts of men,
  Fearless thundered threats aloud.
That false gods might lure again
  None that to Jehovah bowed.

Oft their love and labours kind
Gave to Israel's hardened mind,
And from many wants set free;
  But were met with insult's breath,
Ever doomed reproach to see,
  Scorned, rejected, dragged to death.

And when one was doomed to die,
Voices never ceased to cry;
Warning to conversion still,
  Calling with fresh zeal aloud:
But the blind awaking, slept,
  Heard, but rose not—senseless crowd!

Never were they worn or sad,
Now they rest for ever glad,
This their crown for noble fight;
    And the high reward is given
To the faithful seer, in light,
    God to see unveiled in heaven.

Close entwined their glorious beams,
Like the lightning's golden gleams,
Darting from the silvery cloud,
    Round the ninefold circle blaze,
Where ten thousand angels crowd,
    Tuning ceaseless thanks and praise.

They, before our God most high,
Seen but by one piercing eye,
Who thrice holy Him revere,
    Who before Him ever shine;
Cherubs and pure seraphs here
    In celestial chorus join.

But would all this splendid crowd
Darkened be as night's deep cloud,
If, than all heaven's host more bright,
    She were not above them seen,
Radiant with heaven's purest light—
    She, the Angels' glorious Queen!

REGINA APOSTOLORUM, ORA PRO NOBIS!

QUEEN OF APOSTLES, PRAY FOR US!

Have we, for our friends and foes,
  For our loved ones, far away,
For the flock our Shepherd knows,
  For the dead's eternal day,
For the sick, the weak, the poor,
  For the crowds of sinful men,
Come thy mercy to implore?
  Do thou hear us once again!

Our petitions, as we pray,
  Fervent mount thy throne before,
May devotion make its way,
  May it knock at grace's door.
O descend, thou silvery stream!
  Rich in light, our souls to feed,
That from love, pure love may beam,
  Which, alas! we ever need.

Thou, who dost the prophets rule,
  Thou, apostles' Queen most fair,
Teach us in thy holy school,
  Like thy Son to form our prayer;
Or do thou in pity pray—
  O when didst thou pray in vain?—
For thy own, poor helpless clay,
  Who in want and woe remain.

Pray that from God's holy throne
  Forth may come that Spirit pure,
Who can draw our hearts alone
  To thy Son, inflamed, secure.

He who on the apostles came,
  And their souls with love inspired,
Filled the faint with zeal's bright flame,
  And the weak with courage fired.

This pure Spirit we require
  More by far than daily bread,
Since foul falsehood's base desire
  Darkness would around us spread.
This great Spirit every bond
  With a word of love can burst,
Those who in distress despond
  He can free from hate accursed.

This blest Spirit, in whose sight
  Sinners helpless trembling stand,
Who before truth's glorious light,
  Darkly stray in heart and hand.
May this Spirit, calm and still
  From the Father's mansion beam,
And our priesthood sweetly fill
  With his grace, in hallowed stream.

And like armour strong, and shield,
  On their souls himself so bind,
That to no dread foes they yield,
  Which along their path they find:
Then on double pinions borne,
  Must they restless soar on high,
While the strong may fear and mourn,
  If they want humility.

Strong, when called to fight the fight,
  And the Cross's victory gain;
Humble, to resist aright
  Our own heart's rebellious train.

Strong, to scatter at our feet
  All that snares for men would lay;
Humble, that our sins may meet
  Pardon at the judgment-day.

O good shepherds! safely placed,
  Ever firm the house shall stand;
By new morning shall be chaced
  Masks and phantoms from the land:
And the new-made holy place
  Vernal breeze shall flutter through,
Fairest flowers adorn its face,
  Where the briar and thistle grew.

O good shepherds! who preferred
  In God's worship to remain,
In your mouths the apostles' word,
  In your breasts the martyrs' pain;
One such priest—one, if we would,
  To defend us might suffice,
That no son of Belial should
  Bind us with his curse in vice.

For with this one priest would be
  Every truth and every power,
E'en though falsehood we should see
  Snatch off thousands in her hour;
And if millions should pretend
  There the light of truth to gain,
We will firm in faith attend
  One only, and thus safe remain.

REGINA MARTYRUM, ORA PRO NOBIS!

QUEEN OF MARTYRS, PRAY FOR US!

Are royal purple robes your aim?
Would you be praised and hymned by fame?
Is it your wish to grasp a crown?
  All glorious in your age to shine,
  And round your saddened brows to twine
Fresh wreaths of bay, with fresh renown?

Try them!—the purple hangs in shreds,
Fame feebly flickers round your heads,
Consumed in selfish, senseless play;
  Garlands and crowns are but a name,
  Shadow alone is earthly fame,
No power to fill the soul have they.

For were they aught but outward show,
And freedom gave instead of woe,
You would not for them anxious prove;
  You seek to riot in sweet joy,
  And crowns to grasp without alloy,
On carpet path you love to move.

You would, like giddy, thoughtless boys,
Play in one day with all your toys,
Have tree, and blossom too, and fruit;
  But without roots you plant the tree,
  Blossom thereon can never be,
And fruit to seek is vain pursuit.

And do you grieve that all your dream
Like empty froth and smoke should seem,

Threatening like evil star or spell?
  Crowns true and regal would you find,
  And royal purple round you wind,
And have a kernel in the shell?

Come then! the thing's not hard to say,
Self-love but crucify and slay,
For martyrdom will gain a throne.
  Of martyrdom nought will you know?
  Who will o'ercome, his blood must flow—
This have you never guessed or known?

Not for vain sights must he have bled,
Nor for false fields his blood have shed,
Which self would paint as fields for strife.
  O no! the heart's blood must be spilt,
  And tears and death's cold sweat for guilt,
There where the cross in blood beams life.

The cross alone in simple state—
The cross with all its native weight,
With all its nails and thorny crown;
  The cross, whereon in darkness drear,
  Smarting with pain, transfixed with spear,
A sufferer hangs—God's only Son!

The cross, where sinners pardon find—
The cross, bright beacon to the blind—
The cross, the anchor near and far—
  The cross, which angels hover nigh—
  The cross, from which the devils fly—
The cross, Mount Calvary's bright star.

Forth from its sacred blood's rich rain,
Came blessings on earth's desert plain;

With martyrdom's blest pains and tears,
With its unnumbered faithful throng,
It vanquished Cæsars proud and strong,
And idol-fame of thousand years.

Purple is there, and wounds of death!
There, honour to the latest breath,
And diadems which angels bring:
Not like some vain and worthless crown,
But wreathed with fame and true renown,
The soul from fields of fight takes wing,

And victory's palm-branch waving high,
She mounts, and hastens to draw nigh
That throne, where pleads the Lamb's pure blood,
Where Mary's sweet and holy prayer,
And triumph, interceding there,
At length the wounds of sin make good.

In martyrdom your souls shall rest,
With highest honours crowned and blest,
For witness to the cross you bear;
And though 'mid scoffs and insults bound,
And though with thorns and mockery crowned,
These vanish *here*—your bliss is *there.*

An end has every fear and groan,
With victory's flag you hail the throne,
You cry, "How great the Lord is seen!"
And all your pangs have found an end,
And for each wound does comfort send,
The Martyrs' glorious Queen.

REGINA CONFESSORUM, ORA PRO NOBIS!

QUEEN OF CONFESSORS, PRAY FOR US!

MEN combat and they strive,
And loudly disagree,
And anxiously contrive
In hopes the truth to see;
And each one thinks to win
Truth in his single view,
And thinks it deadly sin
To doubt what is but new.

Better, the more 'tis new,
And praise from crowds will find;
The newest to pursue
Bespeaks their strength of mind.
Beneath, above there glows
Bright day to banish night,
The black soon whitened grows,
How quickly comes the light!

And with poor, vapid lies,
So stale, so idly told,
They gain an easy prize,
And bind in fetters bold
Those who still dream, asleep
In bright and cloudless day,
Sink down the headlong steep,
And no more waken may.

For when the words they heard,
So powerful and true,
That they the sleepers stirred,
Conscious at once they grew.

From falsehood quickly turned,
  And artful tricks away,
With indignation burned,
  Thus to be led astray.

Come then, and gladly hear
  Truth's holy, heavenly word,
God humbly thus revere,
  And banish lies absurd.
Bold and intrepid say,
  Aloud each day renew,
Let hell quake as it may,
  THE CHURCH ALONE SPEAKS TRUE.

Hasten from every land,
  From every clime come here,
Own it with mouth and hand,
  True to your faith so dear.
For should your Saviour see
  You turn from him away,
Woe and deep misery,
  These must your crime repay.

Why should you yield to fear,
  With truth your prize and might;
Who will not venture here,
  'Gainst Belial's power to fight?
If truth has in her fire
  Your armour hardened well,
Does not your heart beat higher—
  Your strength more nobly swell?

Where far o'er every sea
  You tossed and scattered lie,
To one flock gathered be,
  Haste, confessors! and fly.

Proclaim it loud and long,
  Proclaim with voices glad,
That before knowledge strong
  Falsehood is mute and sad.

But first kneel down in dust,
  Strew ashes on your hair,
For faith, in humble trust,
  Offer your earnest prayer.
Then with lips freely own,
  With life, and heart, and hand,
One truth, and one alone,
  Till firm in heart you stand.

Till in increasing bands,
  In lines yet crowded more,
Confessors join their hands,
  And blood for truth will pour.
Till souls lukewarm and weak,
  All foes with homage due,
With full hope loudly speak,
  THE CHURCH ALONE SAYS TRUE.

When falsehood shall behold
  You firm in faith thus grow,
She'll fly, no longer bold,
  Nor sign of life will show.
Then only can she dare,
  If you are sad and shy,
But from truth everywhere,
  And strength and light, will fly.

Then firm the banner hold,
  Which ne'er to earth inclines;
In storms the same unfold—
  Whose image on it shines?

Mary, celestial Queen!
  Our courage shall not die,
Till loftiest towers between,
  We plant your banner high.

REGINA SANCTORUM OMNIUM, ORA PRO NOBIS!

QUEEN OF ALL SAINTS, PRAY FOR US!

Gloomy, and sad, and long are earth's dark nights,
  The bosom heaves oppressed by earth's dull air,
Sorrow and pain invade by ancient rights,
  Till the poor child of dust the grave must share.
Well may the heart from every earthly rock
  Be torn by grief, and dread it as accurst;
The world is but a prison, whose strong lock
  The mighty hand of Death alone can burst.

Nought but deep darkness is our doom below,
  Wounds without healing balm on every side:
By these proud curious man may surely know
  That he to dust is for all time allied—
By these, with all his emptiness and night,
  Before his vain conceit and studied part,
He may direct his view where shines the light,
  And long to feel it beam upon his heart.

For here, this dreary vale of tears within,
  On this lone earth of ashes, dust, and weeds,
In which, from out the wormwood cup of sin,
  One poison drop another quick succeeds,—

There stands a house, and through its lofty halls
The blue of heaven blends with sunshine bright,
Through which the vernal breeze refreshing falls,
And stars move on in ever brilliant light.

This house in beauty and rich state unites
What erst lay poor and scattered far and near:
See how its earthly children it invites,
And bids them welcome in its halls appear.
There for the weary is his rest prepared,
There the infirm and sick refreshment knows,
There to the inquirer is the way declared—
There old, and young, and pilgrim find repose.

There hymns sublime in lofty strains resound,
There pictures glow, as if portrayed by light;
There beauties, too, of every kind abound,
So that all hearts with joy are beaming bright.
The rich here learns to value wealth the more,
The poor becomes in his privations rich—
The one distributes from his joyous store,
The other takes—thus love can level each.

Here every effort gains a noble prize,
And each good deed its end and favour due;
The tears which glistening stand in pious eyes
Here turn to pearls of worth and beauty true.
For the rich image of each soul most pure
An altar stands displayed, 'mid splendours bright,
And from all stains of earthly guilt secure
A coronal appears of glorious light.

Of golden pillars that support the dome,
Which o'er the starry circle vaulted lies;
Of glorious beams, which all proclaim our home
To be for earth's dark woes, heaven's noble prize:

Of saints with heavenly looks of clearest light,
  With flaming hearts, and lips serenely sweet,
And all its glorious bliss, and pure delight,
  Our knowledge, dwelling here, shall be complete.

A starry heaven, in which to take thy place,
  O child of dust! thou art in bounty called,
O be not charged with sloth's supine disgrace!
  O dream not long in slumbers deep enthralled!
The bridegroom, thou well knowest, soon appears,
  And when he comes, woe to the souls that sleep;
Then will no cries avail, nor prayers, nor tears,
  With empty lamps they mourn, in darkness deep.

Who would not, then, to purple robes aspire?
  To golden halls who would not gladly fly?
But can we miss the way we so desire,
  Where stands the house? And will it open lie?
Wide as the world extends from pole to pole,
  Distant as stands heaven's farthest star installed,
Beyond the utmost wanderings of thy soul,
  For this great house the CHURCH OF GOD is called.

No danger now that you should miss the way,
  Since everywhere its signs before you show;
No labyrinth can lead your steps astray,
  If in the cross's path you firmly go.
And where you hear celestial spirits praise,
  And when no joys of earth can welcome be,
Your journey's done, your eyes to glory raise,
  God's great house stands before you—enter free.

You stand on every grace's golden mine,
  You find in thirst a never-failing spring,
When poor and heavy-laden you repine,
  Most does it comfort and refreshment bring.

Then to the coronal rejoicing go,
  The starry heaven, which smiles above, in light,
And to the graces which thence freely flow,
  O hasten quickly from your dreary night!

There can no earthly clogs or ties restrain
  The heart, too oft enslaved by bands so slight,
But purified by tears, not shed in vain,
  It unimpeded wings its heavenward flight:
Then sinks all tremulous, with tears of joy,
  Into this sunny sea, this glorious deep,
Where, in eternal sweets which cannot cloy,
  Secure possession it shall gladly keep.

Then open the triumphal portals higher,
  The saints, the chosen host of God, appear,
Seen is the angels' pure, exulting choir,
  And how they circle round, so bright, so clear,
One glorious throne; where, filled with every grace,
  God's holy Mother sits in love displayed,
The Queen of Saints, in her exalted place,
  Accepts and guards the heart that trusts her undismayed.

REGINA SINE LABE ORIGINALI CONCEPTA, ORA PRO NOBIS!*

QUEEN CONCEIVED WITHOUT ORIGINAL SIN, PRAY FOR US!

FORTH from Heaven's throne there went a stern decree,
God's high, eternal will, severe, but just,
That from primeval sin none should be free,
But all conceived in sin—all turn to dust.

Yet this deep curse on man—this high decree,
This edict of heaven's great, immortal King,
O Virgin Queen! was never made for thee,
No spot, no stain to thee could ever cling.

Before Him thou canst venture without fear,
To kiss his sceptre, and receive a throne;
Thou freely to his presence couldst draw near,
Thou, spotless Virgin Queen! but thou alone.

Would not the eternal Father keep thee free
From every sin that could defile on earth—
Thee, whom he chose before all time to be
His Son's pure Mother, born to give him birth?

Was it not worthy of the Son to take
Flesh which had never been dark Satan's slave?
When he became a Man for lost man's sake,
Would *He* take sinful flesh, who came to save?

* Additional poem by the translator.

And was it less befitting that the spouse
Of God the Holy Ghost should be most pure,
Should need no contrite tears, nor solemn vows,
But from her first conception live secure?

The Lord Omnipotent her soul possessed,
E'en from the first beginning of his ways,
Her in her pure conception he had blessed
With sanctity's sublime, unclouded rays.

O matchless Queen! the Trinity sublime
In thee does power and love alike display;
May we by thee love God through our brief time,
Through thee enjoy Him in eternal day.

MARY, FROM SIN IN THY CONCEPTION FREE,
O PRAY FOR US, WHO HAVE RECOURSE TO THEE!

AVE MARIA, ORA PRO NOBIS!

HAIL MARY, PRAY FOR US!

THROUGH these hymns, all hail to thee!
At thy feet, though worthless, they
Lovingly are laid by me,
For all love must thee obey.

Lovingly thy praise has rung,
Loving homage filled my lay;
That so loving I have sung,
Deepest thanks to thee I pay.

Let this garland for thy bower
  Yet not unaccepted be:
O in many a dreary hour,
  Comfort came with thought of thee!

Let this wreath lie at thy feet,
  Who the rosy throne hast won—
Holy Mary! thee I greet,
  Think of me with thy blest Son.

Reader, who these strains hast read
  Through with simple, pious mind,
Think where'er the Church is spread,
  Constant love its members bind.

Then although we never met,
  Must I strange be evermore?
We must know each other yet,
  Knocking at the self-same door.

Words to thy soul I've supplied,
  To my soul a brother be—
Till that door shall open wide,
  Say an *Ave* still for me.

THE END.

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